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THE

FORM OF GOVERNMENT,

AND

FORMS OF PROCESS,

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

AS AMENDED AND RATIFIED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN MAY, 1821.

THE GERMAN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF THE NORTHWEST.

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BOOK I.

OF GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

*Preliminary Principles.**

THE Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in presenting to the Christian public, the system of union, and the form of government and discipline, which they have adopted, have thought proper to state, by way of introduction, a few of the general principles by which they have been governed in the formation of the plan. This, it is hoped, will, in some measure, prevent those rash misconstructions, and uncandid reflections, which usually proceed from an imperfect view of any subject; as well as make the several parts of the system plain, and the whole perspicuous and fully understood.

* NOTE.—This introductory chapter, with the exception of the first sentence, was first drawn up by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and prefixed to the Form of Government, &c as published by that body in 1788. In that year, after arranging the plan on which the Presbyterian Church is now governed, the Synod was divided into four Synods, and gave place to the General Assembly, which met for the first time, in 1789.

T.A. STONE

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They are unanimously of opinion,

I. That "God alone is Lord of the conscience; "and hath left it free from the doctrine and com- "mandments of men, which are in any thing con- "trary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith "or worship:" Therefore they consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal, and unalienable: They do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others.

II. That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its *communion*, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed: That, in the exercise of this right, they may, notwithstanding, err, in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow: Yet, even in this case, they do not infringe upon the liberty, or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.

III. That our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible church, which is his body, hath appointed officers. not only to preach the gospel *and administer the sacraments;* but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty: and, that it is incumbent upon these *officers*, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure, or cast out the erroneous and scanda-

lous; observing, in *all* cases, the rules contained in the word of God.

IV That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touch-stone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Saviour's rule, "by their fruits ye shall know them." And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. On the contrary, they are persuaded, that there is an inseparable connexion between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise, it would be of no consequence either to discover truth, or to embrace it.

V. That while under the conviction of the above principle, they think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all who are admitted as teachers, be sound in the faith; they also believe, that there are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ: And in all these they think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance towards each other.

VI. That though the character, qualifications, and authority of church officers, are laid down in the holy scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution; yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.

VII. That all church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or, in the way of representation, by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative: *That is to say*, that the holy

scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience, in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now, though it will easily be admitted, that all synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity; yet there is much greater danger, from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made, and common to all who profess the gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.

VIII. *Lastly*, That, if the preceding scriptural and rational principles be steadfastly adhered to, the vigour and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any church. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the church universal.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Church.

I. JESUS CHRIST, who is now exalted far above all principality and power,[a] hath erected in this world a kingdom, which is his church.[b]

I. a Eph. i. 20, 21. When he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,

II. The universal church consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of *Christ*, and of submission to his laws.[c]

III. As this immense multitude can not meet together in one place, to hold communion, or to worship God, it is reasonable, and *warranted by scripture example*, that they should be divided into many particular churches.[d]

and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Psalm lxviii. 18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

b Psalm ii. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Dan. vii. 14. There was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Eph. i. 22, 23. And put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

II. c Rev. v. 9. And hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Acts ii. 39. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 1 Cor. i. 2. compared with 2 Cor. ix. 13.

III. d Gal. i. 21, 22. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ. Rev. i. 4, 20. John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. See also Rev. ii. 1.

IV. A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the holy scriptures;[e] and submitting to a certain form of government.[f]

CHAPTER III.

Of the Officers of the Church.

I. Our blessed Lord, at first, collected his church, out of different nations,[a] and formed it into

IV. e Acts ii. 41, 47. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. 1 Cor. vii. 14. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy. Acts ii. 39. Mark x. 14. compared with Mat. xix. 13, 14. and Luke xviii. 15, 16.

f Heb. viii 5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. Gal. vi. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

I. a Psalm ii. 8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Rev. vii. 9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

one body,[b] by the mission of men endued with miraculous gifts, which have, long since, ceased.[c]

II. The ordinary and perpetual officers in the church, are *Bishops* or *Pastors*;[d] the representatives of the people, usually styled *Ruling Elders*,[e] and *Deacons*.[f]

CHAPTER IV.

Of Bishops or Pastors.

THE *pastoral* office is the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness.[a] The person who fills this office, hath, in scripture, obtained different names, expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed

b 1 Cor. x. 17. For we being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. See also, Eph. iv. 16. Col. i. 98.

c Mat. x. 1, 7, 8. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

II. d 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. Eph. iv. 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. Ver. 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

e 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour.

f Phil. i. 1. To all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.

I. a Rom. xi. 13.

bishop.[b]* As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor.[c] As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister.[d] As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder.[e] As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the angel of the church.[f] As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador.[g] And, as he dispenses the manifold

b Acts xx. 29. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (bishops,) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

c Jer. iii 15. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 4.

d 1 Cor. iv. 1. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament.

e 1 Pet. v. 1. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. See also Tit. i. 5. 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19.

f Mal. ii. 7. Rev. ii. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write. Rev. i. 20. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. See also Rev. iii. 1, 7.

g 2 Cor. v 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Eph. vi. 20.

* As the office and character of the gospel minister is particularly and fully described, in the holy scriptures, under the title of bishop; and as this term is peculiarly expressive of his duty as an overseer of the flock, it ought not to be rejected.

grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.[h]

CHAPTER V.

Of Ruling Elders.

RULING Elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them, for the purpose of exercising government and discipline, in conjunction with pastors or ministers.[a] This office has been understood, by a great part of the protestant reformed churches, to be designated, in the holy scriptures, by the title of governments; and of those who rule well, but do not labour in the word and doctrine.[b]

CHAPTER VI.

Of Deacons.

THE scriptures clearly point out Deacons as distinct officers in the church,[a] whose business it

h Luke xii. 42. Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

i. a 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Rom. xii. 7, 8. Acts xv. 25.

b 1 Cor. xii. 28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after

is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use.[b] To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church.[c]

CHAPTER VII.

Of Ordinances in a particular Church.

THE ordinances, established by Christ the head, in a particular church, which is regularly constituted with its proper officers,[a] are prayer,[b] singing

that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. See letter a.

a Phil. i. 1. Tim. iii. 8 to 15.

b Acts vi. 1, 2. And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

c Acts vi. 3, 5, 6. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

I. a 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 33, 40. Let all things be done to edifying. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let all things be done decently and in order.

b Acts vi. 4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 1 Tim ii. 1.

praises,[c] reading,[d] expounding and preaching the word of God;[e] administering baptism and the Lord's supper;[f] public solemn fasting and thanksgiving,[g] catechising,[h] making collections for the

c Col. iii. 16. Teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Psal. ix. 11. Eph. v. 19. Also Col. iv. 16.

d Acts xv. 21. Luke iv. 16, 17.

e Tit. i. 9. Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. Acts x. 42. He commanded us to preach unto the people. See also, Acts xxviii. 23. Luke xxiv. 47. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Acts ix. 20.

f Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. See ver. 20. and Mark xvi. 15, 16. 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25. For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. Ver. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Compared with 1 Cor. x. 16.

g Luke v. 35. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. Psal. l. 14. Offer unto God thanksgiving: and pay thy vows unto the Most High. Phil. iv. 6. In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. See 1 Tim. ii. 1. Psal. xcv. 2.

h Heb. v. 12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

poor, and other pious purposes;[i] exercising discipline;[k] and blessing the people.[l]

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Church Government, and the several kinds of Judicatories.

I. It is absolutely necessary that the government of the church be exercised under some certain and definite form:[a] And we hold it to be ex-

i 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, 3, 4. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. Gal. ii. 10. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

k Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have thy rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake; and be at peace among yourselves.

l 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. Eph. i. 2. Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. a Ezek. xliii. 11, 12. Show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings-out there-

pedient, and agreeable to scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies. In full consistency with this belief, we embrace, in the spirit of charity, those Christians who differ from us, in opinion or in practice, on these subjects.[b]

II. These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties.[c] Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative.[d] They possess the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ; and of excluding the disobedient and disorderly, from the privileges of the church. To give efficiency, however, to this necessary and scriptural authority, they possess the powers requisite for obtaining evidence and inflicting censure: They can call before them any offender against the order and government of the church; they can require members, of their own society,

of, and the comings-in thereof; and all the forms thereof; and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof; and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. This is the law of the house.

b Acts xv. 5, 6. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

c Luke xii. 13, 14. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? John xviii. 36. My kingdom is not of this world.

d See and consult Acts xv. from the 1st to the 32d ver.

to appear and give testimony in the cause; but the highest punishment to which their authority extends, is to exclude the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers.[e]

CHAP. IX.

Of the Church Session.

I. The Church Session consists of the Pastor or Pastors, and Ruling-Elders of a particular congregation.[a]

II. Of this judicatory, two elders, if there be as many in the congregation, with the pastor, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.

III. The pastor of the congregation shall always be the moderator of the session; except when,

e Mat. xvii. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. 1 Cor. v 4, 5. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I. a 1 Cor v. 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

for prudential reasons, it may appear advisable that some other minister should be invited to preside; in which case the pastor may, with the concurrence of the session, invite such other minister as they may see meet, belonging to the same Presbytery, to preside in that case. The same expedient may be adopted in case of the sickness or absence of the pastor.

IV. It is expedient, at every meeting of the session, more especially when constituted for judicial business, that there be a presiding minister. When, therefore, a church is without a pastor, the moderator of the session shall be, either the minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, or one invited by the session to preside on a particular occasion. But where it is impracticable, without great inconvenience, to procure the attendance of such a moderator, the session may proceed without it.

V. In congregations where there are two or more pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside in the session.

VI. The Church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation;[b] for which purpose, they have power to inquire into the knowledge and christian conduct of the members of the church;[c] to call before them offenders and witnesses, being members of their

VI. b Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. and 1 Tim. v. 17.

c Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

own congregation, and to introduce other witnesses, where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend; to receive members into the church; to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend, or exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve censure;[d] to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.[e]

VII. The pastor has power to convene the session when he may judge it requisite;[f] and he shall always convene them when requested to do so by any two of the elders. The session shall also convene when directed so to do by the Presbytery.

VIII. Every session shall keep a fair record of its proceedings; which record shall be, at least once in every year, submitted to the inspection of the Presbytery.

IX. It is important that every church session keep a fair register of marriages; of baptisms, with the times of the birth of the individuals baptized; of persons admitted to the Lord's table, and of the deaths, and other removals of church members.

d 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves. See also 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15. 1 Cor. xi. 27, to the end.

e Acts xv. 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. Ver. 6. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

VII. f Acts xx. 17.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Presbytery.

I. The Church being divided into many separate congregations, these need mutual counsel and assistance, in order to preserve soundness of doctrine, and regularity of discipline, and to enter into common measures for promoting knowledge and religion, and for preventing infidelity, error and immorality.[a] Hence arise the importance and usefulness of Presbyterial and Synodical assemblies.[b]

II. A Presbytery consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district.

III. Every congregation, which has a stated

I. a The church of Jerusalem consisted of more than one, as is manifest both before and after the dispersion, from Acts vi. 1, 6. Acts ix. 31. Acts xxi. 20. Acts vi. 2. These congregations were under one presbyterial government, proved from Acts xv. 24, 28. Acts xi. 22, 30. Acts xxi. 17, 18. Acts vi. chap. That the church of Ephesus had more congregations than one under a presbyterial government, appears from Acts xx. 31. Chap. xix. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9, 19, compared with Acts xviii. 19, 24, 26. Acts xx. 17, 25, 28, 30, 36, 37. Rev. ii, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, joined with Acts xx. 17, 18.

b 1 Tim. iv. 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Acts xv. 2. Verse 4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. Verse 6. And the Apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

pastor, has a right to be represented by one elder; and every collegiate church by two or more elders, in proportion to the number of its pastors.

IV. Where two or more congregations are united under one pastor, all such congregations shall have but one elder to represent them.

V. Every vacant congregation which is regularly organized, shall be entitled to be represented by a ruling elder in Presbytery.

VI. Every elder not known to the Presbytery, shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment, from the church which he represents.[c]

VII. Any three ministers, and as many elders as may be present belonging to the Presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.[d]

VIII. The Presbytery has power to receive and issue appeals from church sessions,[e] and references

VI. c Acts xv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 33, 40. Let all things be done to edifying. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let all things be done decently, and in order.

VII. d Acts xiv. And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended by the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentile: compared with Acts xi. 18. And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

VIII. e Acts xv. 5. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. Ver. 6. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Ver. 19. Where-

brought before them in an orderly manner;[f] to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry;[g] to ordain, instal, remove, and judge ministers;[h] to examine and approve or censure the records of church sessions; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed;[i] to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church;[k] to visit

fore my sentence is; that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are returned to God: Ver. 20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

f Acts xviii. 24, 27. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him. Compared with Acts xix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

g 1 Tim. iv. 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Acts xiii. 2, 3. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and layed their hands on them, they sent them away.

h Acts xv. 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. 1 Cor. v. 3.

i Acts xv. 10. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear? Compared with Gal. ii. 4, 5.

k Acts xv. 22, 23, 24. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, and they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in

particular churches, for the purpose of inquiring into their state, and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them;[l] to unite or divide congregations, at the request of the people, or to form or receive new congregations, and in general to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.[m]

IX. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to keep a full and fair record of their proceedings, and to report to the Synod, every year, licensures, ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union or division of congregations, or the formation of new ones, and in general, all the important changes which may have taken place within their bounds in the course of the year.

X. The Presbytery shall meet on its own adjournment; and when any emergency shall require

Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with words subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment.

Acts xx. 17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church Acts vi. 2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Acts xv. 30. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together; they delivered the epistle.

m Eph. vi. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints. Phil. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.

a meeting sooner than the time to which it stands adjourned, the moderator, or in case of his absence, death, or inability to act, the stated clerk shall, with the concurrence, or at the request of two ministers and two elders, the elders being of different congregations, call a special meeting. For this purpose he shall send a circular letter, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every member belonging to the Presbytery, and to the session of every vacant congregation, in due time previous to the meeting; which shall not be less than ten days. And nothing shall be transacted at such special meetings besides the particular business for which the judicatory has been thus convened.

XI. At every meeting of Presbytery, a sermon shall be delivered, if convenient; and every particular session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

XII. Ministers in good standing in other Presbyteries, or in any sister churches, who may happen to be present, may be invited to sit with the Presbytery, as corresponding members. Such members shall be entitled to deliberate and advise, but not to vote in any decisions of the Presbytery.

CHAPTER XI.

*Of the Synod.**

I. As a Presbytery is a convention of the bishops and elders within a certain district: so a Sy-

* As the proofs already adduced in favour of a presbyterial assembly in the government of the church, are equal-

nod is a convention of the bishops and elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries. The ratio of the representation of elders in the Synod, is the same as in the Presbytery.

II. Any seven ministers, belonging to the Synod, who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with as many elders as may be present, shall be a quorum to transact synodical business; provided not more than three of the said ministers belong to one Presbytery.

III. The same rule, as to corresponding members, which was laid down with respect to the Presbytery, shall apply to the Synod.

IV. The Synod has power to receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the Presbyteries; to decide on all references made to them; to review the records of Presbyteries, and approve or censure them; to redress whatever has been done by Presbyteries contrary to order; to take effectual care that Presbyteries observe the constitution of the church; to erect new Presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected; generally to take such order with respect to Presbyteries, sessions and people under their care as may be in conformity with the word of God and the established rules, and which tend to promote the edification of the church; and, finally, to propose to the General Assembly, for their adoption, such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole church.

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ly valid in support of a synodical assembly, it is unnecessary to repeat the scriptures to which reference has been made under Chap. X, or to add any other.

V. The Synod shall convene at least once in each year; at the opening of which a sermon shall be delivered by the moderator, or in case of his absence, by some other member; and every particular session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

VI. It shall be the duty of the Synod to keep full and fair records of its proceedings, to submit them annually to the inspection of the General Assembly, and to report to the Assembly the number of its Presbyteries, and of the members and alterations of the Presbyteries.

CHAPTER XII.

*Of the General Assembly.**

I. The General Assembly is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church. It shall repre-

* The radical principles of presbyterian church government and discipline are;—That the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one church of Christ, called emphatically *the church*;—that a larger part of *the church*, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein;—that, in like manner, a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part and to all the parts united, that is, that *a majority shall govern:* And consequently, that appeals may be carried from lower to higher judicatories, till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of *the whole church*. For these principles and this procedure, the example of the apostles and the practice of the primitive church is considered as authority. See Acts xv. 1, 2, 4, 6. and from the 2d to the 29th verses; also Acts xvi. 14. and the proofs adduced under the three last chapters.

sent in one body, all the particular churches of this denomination; and shall bear the title of THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

II. The General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery, in the following proportion: viz. each Presbytery consisting of not more than nine ministers, shall send one minister and one elder; each Presbytery consisting of more than nine ministers, and not more than eighteen, shall send two ministers and two elders; and in the like proportion for every nine ministers in any Presbytery. And these delegates so appointed shall be styled, *Commissioners to the General Assembly.*

III. Any fourteen or more of these commissioners, one half of whom shall be ministers, being met on the day, and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

IV. The General Assembly shall receive and issue all appeals and references, which may be regularly brought before them, from the inferior judicatories. They shall review the records of every synod, and approve or censure them: they shall give their advice and instruction in all cases submitted to them, in conformity with the constitution of the church; and they shall constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence and mutual confidence, among all our churches.

V. To the General Assembly also belongs the power of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; of reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or im-

morality in practice, in any Church, Presbytery, or Synod; of erecting new synods, when it may be judged necessary; of superintending the concerns of the whole church; of corresponding with foreign churches, on such terms as may be agreed upon by the assembly and the corresponding body; of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations; and, in general of recommending and attempting reformation of manners, and the promotion of charity, truth, and holiness, through all the churches under their care.

VI. Before any overtures or regulations proposed by the assembly to be established as constitutional rules, shall be obligatory on the churches, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and to receive the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof.

VII. The General Assembly shall meet at least once in every year. On the day appointed for that purpose, the moderator of the last Assembly, if present, or, in case of his absence, some other minister, shall open the meeting with a sermon, and preside until a new moderator be chosen. No Commissioner shall have a right to deliberate or vote in the Assembly, until his name shall have been enrolled by the clerk, and his commission publicly read, and filed among the papers of the Assembly.

VIII. Each session of the Assembly shall be opened and closed with prayer. And the whole business of the Assembly being finished, and the vote taken for dissolving the present Assembly, the moderator shall say from the chair,—"By vir-

"tue of the authority delegated to me, by the "church, let this General Assembly be dissolved, "and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another "General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, "to meet at on the day of "A. D. "—after which he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce on those present the Apostolic benediction.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of Electing and Ordaining Ruling Elders and Deacons.

I. HAVING defined the officers of the church, and the judicatories by which it shall be governed, it is proper here to prescribe the mode in which ecclesiastical rulers shall be ordained to their respective offices, as well as some of the principles by which they shall be regulated in discharging their several duties.

II. Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of Ruling Elder, and to the office of Deacon, or either of them, in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation.[a] But in all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion in the church in which they are to exercise their office.

III. When any person shall have been elected,

a 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Let all things be done decently and in order.

to either of these offices, and shall have declared his willingness to accept thereof, he shall be set apart in the following manner:

IV. After sermon the minister shall state, in a concise manner, the warrant and nature of the office of Ruling Elder, or Deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained, and the duties to be filled by the officer elect: having done this, he shall propose to the candidate, in the presence of the congregation, the following questions:—viz.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confession of faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

3. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States?

4. Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder, (or Deacon, as the case may be,) in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof?

5. Do you promise to study the peace, unity and purity, of the Church?

The Elder, or Deacon elect, having answered these questions in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the Church the following question:—viz.

Do you, the members of this Church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a Ruling Elder (or Deacon) and do you promise to yield him all

that honour, encouragement and obedience in the Lord, to which his office, according to the word of God, and the constitution of this Church entitles him?

The members of the Church having answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer, to the office of Ruling Elder, (or Deacon, as the[b] case may be,) and shall give to him, and the congregation, an exhortation suited to the occasion.

V. Where there is an existing session, it is proper that the members of that body, at the close of the service, and in the face of the congregation, take the newly ordained elder by the hand; saying in words to this purpose—"We give you the "right hand of fellowship, to take part of this of-"fice with us."

VI. The offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon, are both perpetual, and can not be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of either office but by deposition. Yet an Elder or Deacon may become, by age or infirmity, incapable of performing the duties of his office; or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable, in his official character, to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs. In either of these cases, he may, as often happens with respect to a minister, cease to be an acting Elder or Deacon.

VII. Whenever a Ruling Elder or Deacon, from

[b] Acts vi. 5, 6.

either of these causes, or from any other, not inferring crime, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the Session shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on their records. *Provided always*, that nothing of this kind shall be done without the concurrence of the individual in question, unless by the advice of Presbytery.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of licensing Candidates, or Probationers, to preach the Gospel.

I. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had of them who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded, by being committed to weak or unworthy men;[a] and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose Presbyteries shall license Probationers to preach the Gospel, that after a competent trial of their talents, and receiving from the churches a good report, they may, in due time, ordain them to the sacred office.[b]

a 1 Tim. iii. 6. Not a novice. 2 Tim. ii. 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

b 1 Tim. iii. 7. 3 John xii.

II. Every candidate for licensure shall be taken on trials by that Presbytery to which he most naturally belongs; and he shall be considered as most naturally belonging to that Presbytery within the bounds of which he has ordinarily resided. But in case any candidate should find it more convenient to put himself under the care of a Presbytery at a distance from that to which he most naturally belongs, he may be received by the said Presbytery, on his producing testimonials either from the Presbytery within the bounds of which he has commonly resided, or from any two ministers of that Presbytery in good standing, of his exemplary piety, and other requisite qualifications?

III. It is proper and requisite that candidates applying to the Presbytery to be licensed to preach the Gospel, produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character and of their being regular members of some particular church. And it is the duty of the Presbytery, for their satisfaction with regard to the real piety of such candidates, to examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office.[c] This examination shall be close and particular, and, in most cases, may best be conducted in the presence of the Presbytery only. And it is recommended, that the candidate be also required to produce a diploma, of bachelor or master of arts,

c Rom. ii. 21. Thou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? &c. in connexion with letter a.

from some college or university: or, at least, authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.

IV. Because it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the church, to entrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men,[d] the Presbytery shall try each candidate, as to his knowledge of the Latin language; and the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written. They shall also examine him, on the arts and sciences; on theology, natural and revealed; and on ecclesiastical history, the sacraments and church government. And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce, the doctrines of the Gospel, the Presbytery shall require of him,

1. A Latin *Exegesis*, on some common head in divinity.

2. A *Critical Exercise;* in which the candidate shall give a specimen of his taste and judgment in sacred criticism; presenting an explication of the original text, stating its connexion, illustrating its force and beauties, removing its difficulties, and solving any important questions which it may present.

3 A *Lecture*, or exposition of several verses of Scripture; and,

4. A Popular Sermon.

V. These, or other similar exercises, at the discretion of the Presbytery, shall be exhibited until they shall have obtained satisfaction as to the candidate's piety, literature, and aptness to teach in

d See letters a and b.

the churches.[e] The lecture and popular sermon, if the Presbytery think proper, may be delivered in the presence of a congregation.

VI. That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of insufficient men into the sacred office,[f] it is recommended, that no candidate, except in extraordinary cases, be licensed, unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years, under some approved divine or professor of theology.

VII. If the Presbytery be satisfied with his trials, they shall then proceed to license him, in the following manner: The moderator shall propose to him the following questions: viz.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confession of faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

3. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

4. Do you promise to submit yourself in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other Presbytery in the bounds of which you may be called?

VIII. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and the moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he

e 1 Tim. iii. 2. Apt to teach. See also the foregoing quotations.

f See letter a.

shall address himself to the candidate to the following purpose:—"In the name of the Lord Jesus "Christ, and by that authority which he hath given "to the church for its edification, we do license "you to preach the gospel, wherever God in his "providence may call you: and for this purpose, "may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the "Spirit of Christ fill your heart.—*Amen!*" and record shall be made of the licensure, in the following or like form: viz.

At the day of
the Presbytery of having
received testimonials in favour of
of his having gone through a regular course of literature; of his good moral character; and of his being in the communion of the church: proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for his licensure: and he having given satisfaction as to his accomplishments in literature; as to his experimental acquaintance with religion; and as to his proficiency in Divinity and other studies; the Presbytery did, and hereby do express their approbation of all these parts of trial: and he having adopted the confession of faith of this church, and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to candidates to be licensed; the Presbytery did, and hereby do license him, the said
to preach the Gospel of Christ, as a probationer for the holy ministry, within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called.

IX. When any candidate for licensure, shall

have occasion, while his trials are going on, to remove from the bounds of his own Presbytery into those of another, it shall be considered as regular for the latter Presbytery, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, to take up his trials at the point at which they were left, and conduct them to a conclusion, in the same manner as if they had been commenced by themselves.

X. In like manner when any candidate after licensure, shall by the permission of his Presbytery, remove without its limits, an extract of the record of his licensure, accompanied with a Presbyterial recommendation, signed by the clerk, shall be his testimonials to the Presbytery under whose care he shall come.

XI. When a Licentiate shall have been preaching for a considerable time, and his services do not appear to be edifying to the churches, the Presbytery may, if they think proper, recal his license.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the Election and Ordination of Bishops or Pastors, and Evangelists.

I. When any probationer shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of any congregation, as that the people appear prepared to elect a pastor, the session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose: and it shall always be the duty of the session to convene them, when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case, shall, by a petition, request that a meeting may be called.

II. When such a meeting is intended, the session shall solicit the presence and counsel of some neighbouring minister, to assist them in conducting the election contemplated, unless highly inconvenient on account of distance; in which case they may proceed without such assistance.

III. On a Lord's day, immediately after public worship, it shall be intimated from the pulpit, that all the members of that congregation are requested to meet, on ensuing, at the church, or usual place for holding public worship; then and there, if it be agreeable to them, to proceed to the election of a Pastor for that congregation.

IV. On the day appointed, the minister invited to preside, if he be present, shall, if it be deemed expedient, preach a sermon; and after sermon he shall announce to the people, that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation, for a Pastor, if such be their desire: and when this desire shall be expressed, by a majority of voices, he shall then proceed to take votes accordingly. In this election, no person shall be entitled to vote, who refuses to submit to the censures of the church, regularly administered; or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements, or the rules of that congregation, to all its necessary expenses.

V. When the votes are taken, if it appear that a large minority of the people are averse from the candidate who has a majority of votes, and can not be induced to concur in the call, the presiding minister shall endeavour to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people

be nearly, or entirely, unanimous; or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a Pastor, the presiding minister, in that case, after using his utmost endeavours to persuade the congregation to unanimity, shall proceed to draw a call, in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors; certifying at the same time, in writing, the number and the circumstances of those who do not concur in the call: all which proceedings shall be laid before the Presbytery, together with the call.

VI. The call shall be in the following, or like form: viz.

The congregation of being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you and having good hopes, from our past experience of your labours, that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you, the sum of in regular quarterly (or half yearly, or yearly) payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular Pastor of this church. In testimony whereof, we have respectively subscribed our names, this day of A. D.

Attested by A. D. *Moderator of the meeting.*

VII. But if any congregation shall choose to subscribe their call by their Elders and Deacons, or

by their Trustees, or by a select committee, they shall be at liberty to do so. But it shall, in such cases, be fully certified to the Presbytery, by the minister, or other person who presided, that the persons signing have been appointed, for that purpose, by a public vote of the congregation; and that the call has been, in all other respects, prepared as above directed.

VIII. When a call shall be presented to any minister or candidate, it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his instalment. The acceptance of a call, by a minister or candidate, shall always be considered as a request, on his part, to be installed at the same time. And when a candidate shall be ordained in consequence of a call from any congregation, the Presbytery shall, at the same time, if practicable, instal him pastor of that congregation.

IX. The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the Presbytery, under whose care the person called shall be; that, if the Presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented: and no minister or candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the Presbytery.

X. If the call be to the licentiate of another Presbytery, in that case the commissioners deputed from the congregation to prosecute the call, shall produce, to that judicatory, a certificate from their own Presbytery, regularly attested by the moderator and clerk, that the call has been laid before them, and that it is in order. If that Presbytery present the call to their licentiate, and he be dis-

posed to accept it, they shall then dismiss him from their jurisdiction, and require him to repair to that Presbytery, into the bounds of which he is called; and there to submit himself to the usual trials preparatory to ordination.

XI. Trials for ordination, especially in a different Presbytery from that in which the candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the Presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the constitution, the rules and principles of the government and discipline of the church; together with such written discourse, or discourses, founded on the word of God, as to the Presbytery shall seem proper.[a] The Presbytery, being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought to be, if convenient, in that church of which he is to be the minister. It is also recommended that a fast day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination.[b]

XII. The day appointed for ordination being come, and the Presbytery convened, a member of the Presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same, or another member, appointed to preside, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of the

a See the proofs in sections 1, 2, 3, 4, of chapter 14.
b Acts xiii. 2, 3.

Presbytery preparatory to this transaction: he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance; and endeavour to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.

Then addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions, viz.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?[e]

2. Do you sincerely receive, and adopt, the confession of faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures?[d]

3. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church, in these United States?[e]

4. Do you promise subjection to your brethren, in the Lord?[f]

5. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry, from love to God, and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gòspel of his Son?[g]

6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the church; whatever persecution or opposition, may arise unto you on that account?[h]

7. Do you engage to be faithful, and diligent in

c 2 Tim. iii. 16. Eph. ii. 20.
d 2 Tim. i. 13.
e See letter e.
f 2 Pet. v. 5.
g 1 Cor. ii. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 5.
h Acts xx. 17—31.

the exercise of all private and personal duties, which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel; as well as in all relative duties, and the public duties of your office; endeavouring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation; and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?[i]

8. Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call? And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them, as God shall give you strength?[k]

XIII. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to the people the following questions:

1. Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive whom you have called to be your minister?

2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth, with meekness and love; and to submit to him, in the due exercise of discipline?[l]

3. Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labour, and to assist his endeavours for your instruction and spiritual edification?[m]

4. And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that competent worldly mainten-

i See the epistles to Timothy and Titus throughout.
k 1 Pet. v. 2.
l James i. 21. Heb. xiii. 17.
m 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

ance which you have promised; and whatever else you may see needful, for the honour of religion, and his comfort among you?[n]

XIV. The people having answered these questions, in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel down, in the most convenient part of the church. Then the presiding minister shall, by prayer,[o] and with laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,[p] according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees: and the minister who presides shall first, and afterwards all the members of the Presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with us."[q] After which the minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God, to the newly ordained bishop,[r] and to the people,[s] to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties; and shall then, by prayer, recommend them both to the grace of God, and his holy keeping, and finally, after singing a psalm, shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessings. And the Presbytery shall duly record the transaction.

XV. As it is sometimes desirable and important

n 1 Cor. ix. 7—15.
o Acts xiii. 2, 3.
p 1 Tim. iv. 14.
q Gal. ii. 9. Acts i. 25.
r 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.
s Mark v. 24. Heb. ii. 1. See also letters m, n, o.

that a candidate who has not received a call to be the pastor of a particular congregation, should, nevertheless, be ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, as an evangelist to preach the gospel, administer sealing ordinances, and organize churches, in frontier and destitute settlements; in this case, the last of the preceding questions shall be omitted, and the following used as a substitute:—viz.

Are you now willing to undertake the work of an Evangelist; and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent on you in this character, as God shall give you strength?

CHAPTER XVI.

Of translation, or removing a Minister from one charge to another.

I. No bishop shall be translated from one church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but by the permission of the presbytery.

II. Any church, desiring to call a settled minister from his present charge, shall, by commissioners properly authorised, represent to the presbytery the ground on which they plead his removal. The presbytery, having maturely considered their plea, may, according as it appears more or less reasonable, either recommend to them to desist from prosecuting the call, or may order it to be delivered to the minister to whom it is directed. If the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued, at that presbytery, a written citation shall

be given to the Minister, and his congregation, to appear before the presbytery at their next meeting. This citation shall be read from the pulpit in that church, by a member of the presbytery appointed for that purpose, immediately after public worship; so that, at least, two sabbaths shall intervene betwixt the citation, and the meeting of the presbytery at which the cause of translation is to be considered. The presbytery, being met, and having heard the parties, shall, upon the whole view of the case, either continue him in his former charge, or translate him, as they shall deem to be most for the peace and edification of the church; or refer the whole affair to the synod, at their next meeting, for their advice and direction.

III. When the congregation calling any settled minister is within the limits of another presbytery, that congregation shall obtain leave from the presbytery to which they belong, to apply to the presbytery of which he is a member: and that presbytery, having cited him and his congregation as before directed, shall proceed to hear and issue the cause. If they agree to the translation, they shall release him from his present charge; and having given him proper testimonials, shall require him to repair to that presbytery, within the bounds of which the congregation calling him lies, that the proper steps may be taken for his regular settlement in that congregation: and the presbytery to which the congregation belongs, having received an authenticated certificate of his release, under the hand of the clerk of that presbytery, shall proceed to instal him in the congregation, as soon as convenient. Provided always, that no bishop or

pastor shall be translated, without his own consent previously obtained.

IV. When any minister is to be settled in a congregation, the instalment, which consists in constituting a pastoral relation between him and the people of that particular church, may be performed, either by the presbytery, or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient: and the following order shall be observed therein.

V. A day shall be appointed for the instalment, at such time as may appear most convenient, and due notice thereof given to the congregation.

VI. When the presbytery, or committee, shall be convened and constituted, on the day appointed, a sermon shall be delivered, by some one of the members previously appointed thereto; immeately after which, the bishop who is to preside, shall state to the congregation the design of their meeting, and briefly recite the proceedings of the presbytery relative thereto. And then, addressing himself to the minister to be installed, shall propose to him the following or similar questions:

1. Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, as their pastor, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call?

2. Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and the good of his church?

3. Do you solemnly promise, that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavour

faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation; and will be careful to maintain a deportment, in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ, agreeably to your ordination engagements? To all these having received satisfactory answers, he shall propose to the people the same or like questions, as those directed under the head of ordination; which having been also satisfactorily answered, by holding up the right hand, in testimony of assent, he shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said minister to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. A charge shall then be given to both parties, as directed in the case of ordination; and, after prayer, and singing a psalm adapted to the transaction, the congregation shall be dismissed with the usual benediction.

VII. It is highly becoming, that, after the solemnity of the instalment, the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the elders, and those appointed to take care of the temporal concerns of that church, should come forward to their pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of resigning a Pastoral Charge.

When any minister shall labour under such grievances in his congregation, as that he shall de-

sire leave to resign his pastoral charge, the presbytery shall cite the congregation to appear, by their commissioners at their next meeting, to show cause, if any they have, why the presbytery should not accept the resignation. If the congregation fail to appear, or if their reasons for retaining their pastor be deemed by the presbytery insufficient, he shall have leave granted to resign his pastoral charge, of which due record shall be made; and that church shall be held to be vacant, till supplied again, in an orderly manner, with another minister: and if any congregation shall desire to be released from their pastor, a similar process, *mutatis mutandis*, shall be observed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of Missions.

When vacancies become so numerous in any presbytery, that they can not be supplied with the frequent administration of the word and ordinances, it shall be proper for such presbytery, or any vacant congregation within their bounds, with the leave of the presbytery, to apply to any other presbytery, or to any synod, or to the general assembly, for such assistance as they can afford. And, when any presbytery shall send any of their ministers or probationers to distant vacancies, the missionary shall be ready to produce his credentials to the presbytery or presbyteries, through the bounds

of which he may pass, or at least to a committee thereof, and obtain their approbation. And the general assembly may, of their own knowledge, send missions to any part to plant churches, or to supply vacancies: and, for this purpose, may direct any presbytery to ordain evangelists, or ministers without relation to particular churches. *Provided always*, that such missions be made with the consent of the parties appointed; and that the judicatory sending them, make the necessary provision for their support and reward in the performance of this service.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of Moderators.

I. It is equally necessary in the judicatories of the church, as in other assemblies, that there should be a moderator or president; that the business may be conducted with order and despatch.

II. The moderator is to be considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order; for convening and adjourning the judicatory; and directing its operations according to the rules of the church. He is to propose to the judicatory every subject of deliberation that comes before them. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and speedy way of bringing any business to issue. He shall prevent the members from interrupting each other; and require them,

in speaking, always to address the chair. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject; and from using personal reflections. He shall silence those who refuse to obey order. He shall prevent members who attempt to leave the judicatory without leave obtained from him. He shall, at a proper season, when the deliberations are ended, put the question and call the votes. If the judicatory be equally divided he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time; and if the judicatory be again equally divided, and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost. In all questions he shall give a concise and clear state of the object of the vote; and the vote being taken, shall then declare how the question is decided. And he shall likewise be empowered on any extraordinary emergency, to convene the judicatory, by his circular letter, before the ordinary time of meeting.

III. The moderator of the Presbytery shall be chosen from year to year, or at every meeting of the Presbytery, as the Presbytery may think best. The moderator of the Synod, and of the General Assembly, shall be chosen at each meeting of those judicatories: and the moderator, or, in case of his absence, another member appointed for the purpose, shall open the next meeting with a sermon, and shall hold the chair till a new moderator be chosen.

CHAPTER XX.

Of Clerks.

Every judicatory shall choose a clerk, to record their transactions, whose continuance shall be during pleasure. It shall be the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully; and to grant extracts from them, whenever properly required: and such extracts, under the hand of the clerk, shall be considered as authentic vouchers of the fact which they declare, in any ecclesiastical judicatory, and to every part of the church.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of vacant Congregations assembling for Public Worship.

Considering the great importance of weekly assembling the people, for the public worship of God; in order thereby to improve their knowledge; to confirm their habits of worship, and their desire of the public ordinances; to augment their reverence for the most high God; and to promote the charitable affections which unite men most firmly in society: it is recommended, that every vacant congregation meet together, on the Lord's day, at one or more places, for the purpose of prayer, singing praises, and reading the holy scriptures,

together with the works of such approved divines, as the presbytery, within whose bounds they are, may recommend, and they may be able to procure; and that the elders or deacons be the persons who shall preside, and select the portions of scripture, and of the other books to be read; and to see that the whole be conducted in a becoming and orderly manner.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of Commissioners to the General Assembly.

I. The commissioners to the General Assembly shall always be appointed by the Presbytery from which they come, at its last stated meeting, immediately preceding the meeting of the General Assembly; provided, that there be a sufficient interval, between that time and the meeting of the Assembly, for their commissioners to attend to their duty in due season; otherwise, the Presbytery may make the appointment at any stated meeting, not more than seven months preceding the meeting of the Assembly. And as much as possible to prevent all failure in the representation of the Presbyteries, arising from unforeseen accidents to those first appointed, it may be expedient for each Presbytery, in the room of each commissioner, to appoint also an alternate commissioner to supply his place, in case of necessary absence.

II. Each commissioner, before his name shall be enrolled as a member of the Assembly, shall

produce, from his Presbytery, a commission under the hand of the moderator and clerk, in the following or like form: viz.

"The Presbytery of being met at "on the day of "doth hereby appoint bishop of the "congregation of [or "ruling elder in the congregation of as "the case may be;"] (to which the Presbytery "may, if they think proper, make a substitution "in the following form, or in case of his absence, "then bishop of the congregation of "[or ruling elder in the con-"gregation of as the case may be;]) "to be a commissioner, on behalf of this Presbytery, to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, "to meet at on the day of "A. D. or wherever, and "whenever the said Assembly may happen to sit; "to consult, vote, and determine, on all things "that may come before that body, according to "the principles and constitution of this church "and the word of God. And of his diligence "herein, he is to render an account at his return.

Signed by order of the Presbytery,

Moderator,

Clerk."

And the Presbytery shall make record of the appointment.

III. In order, as far as possible, to procure a respectable and full delegation to all our judicatories, it is proper that the expenses of ministers and

elders in their attendance on these judicatories, be defrayed by the bodies which they respectively represent.

BOOK II.

OF DISCIPLINE.

CHAPTER I.

General principles of Discipline.

I. DISCIPLINE is the exercise of that authority, and the application of that system of laws, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed in his church.

II. The exercise of discipline is highly important and necessary. Its ends are, the removal of offences; the vindication of the honour of Christ; the promotion of the purity and general edification of the church; and also the benefit of the offender himself.

III. An offence is any thing in the principles or practice of a church member, which is contrary to the word of God; or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification.

IV. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any judicatory as an offence, or admitted as matter of accusation, which can not be proved to be such from Scripture, or from the regulations

and practice of the church, founded on Scripture; and which does not involve those evils, which discipline is intended to prevent.

V. The exercise of discipline in such a manner as to edify the church, requires not only much of the spirit of piety, but also much prudence and discretion. It becomes the rulers of the church, therefore, to take into view all the circumstances which may give a different character to conduct, and render it more or less offensive; and which may, of course, require a very different mode of proceeding in similar cases, at different times, for the attainment of the same end.

VI. All baptized persons are members of the church, are under its care, and subject to its government and discipline: and when they have arrived at the years of discretion, they are bound to perform all the duties of church members.

VII. Offences are either *private* or *public;* to each of which, appropriate modes of proceeding belong.

CHAPTER II.

Of Private Offences.

I. PRIVATE offences are such as are known only to an individual, or at most to a very few.

II. Private offences ought not to be immediately prosecuted before a church judicatory, because the objects of discipline may be quite as well, and, in many cases, much better attained, by a different

course; and because a public prosecution, in such circumstances, would tend unnecessarily to spread the knowledge of offences, to exasperate and harden offenders, to extend angry and vexatious litigation, and thus to render the discipline of the church more injurious than the original offence.

III. No complaint or information, on the subject of personal and private injuries, shall be admitted, unless those means of reconciliation, and of privately reclaiming the offender, have been used, which are required by Christ, Mat. xviii. 15, 16. And in case of offences, which, though not personal, are private, that is, known only to one, or a very few, it is proper to take the same steps, as far as circumstances admit.

IV. Those who bring information of private and personal injuries before judicatories, without having taken these previous steps, shall themselves be censured, as guilty of an offence against the peace and order of the church.

V. If any person shall spread the knowledge of an offence, unless so far as shall be unavoidable, in prosecuting it before the proper judicatory, or in the due performance of some other indispensable duty, he shall be liable to censure, as a slanderer of his brethren.

CHAPTER III.

Of Public Offences.

I. A public offence is that which is attended with such circumstances as to require the cognizance of a church judicatory.

II. This is always the case, when an offence is either so notorious and scandalous, as that no private steps would obviate its injurious effects; or when, though originally known to one, or a few, the private steps have been ineffectual, and there is, obviously, no way of removing the offence, but by means of a judicial process.

III. An offence gross in itself, and known to several, may be so circumstanced, that it plainly can not be prosecuted to conviction. In such cases, however grievous it may be to the pious, to see an unworthy member in the church, it is proper to wait until God, in his righteous providence, shall give further light; as few things tend more to weaken the authority of discipline, and to multiply offences, than to commence process without sufficient proof.

IV. When any person is charged with a crime, not by an individual, or individuals, coming forward as accusers, but by *general rumour*, the previous steps prescribed by our Lord in case of private offences, are not necessary; but the proper judicatory is bound to take immediate cognizance of the affair.

V. In order to render an offence proper for the cognizance of a judicatory, on this ground, the rumour must specify some particular sin or sins; it must be general, or widely spread; it must not be transient, but permanent, and rather gaining strength than declining: and it must be accompanied with strong presumption of truth. Taking up charges on this ground, of course, requires great

caution, and the exercise of much christian prudence.

VI. It may happen, however, that in consequence of a report, which does not fully amount to a *general rumour*, as just described, a slandered individual may request a judicial investigation, which it may be the duty of the judicatory to institute.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Actual Process.

I. When all other means of removing an offence have failed, the judicatory to which cognizance of it properly belongs, shall judicially take it into consideration.

II. There are two modes in which an offence may be brought before a judicatory: either by an individual or individuals, who appear as accusers, and undertake to substantiate the charge; or by common fame.

III. In the former case, process must be pursued in the name of the accuser or accusers. In the latter, there is no need of naming any person as the accuser. *Common fame* is the accuser. Yet a *general rumour* may be raised by the rashness, censoriousness, or malice of one or more individuals. When this appears to have been the case, such individuals ought to be censured, in proportion to the degree of criminality which appears attached to their conduct.

IV. Great caution ought to be exercised in receiving accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit toward the accused; who is not of good character; who is himself under censure or process; who is deeply interested, in any respect, in the conviction of the accused; or who is known to be litigious, rash, or highly imprudent.

V. When a judicatory enters on the consideration of a crime or crimes alleged, no more shall be done, at the first meeting, unless by consent of parties, than to give the accused a copy of each charge, with the names of the witnesses to support it; and to cite all concerned to appear at the next meeting of the judicatory, to have the matter fully heard and decided. Notice shall be given to the parties concerned, at least ten days previously to the meeting of the judicatory.

VI. The citations shall be issued and signed by the moderator or clerk, by order, and in the name of the judicatory. He shall also furnish citations for such witnesses as the accused shall nominate, to appear on his behalf.

VII. Although it is required that the accused be informed of the names of all the witnesses who are to be adduced against him, at least ten days before the time of trial, (unless he consent to wave the right, and proceed immediately,) it is not necessary that he, on his part, give a similar notice to the judicatory of all the witnesses intended to be adduced by him for his exculpation.

VIII. In exhibiting charges, the times, places, and circumstances should, if possible, be ascertain-

ed and stated, that the accused may have an opportunity to prove an *alibi*, or to extenuate or alleviate his offence.

IX. The judicatory, in many cases, may find it more for edification, to send some members to converse, in a private manner, with the accused person; and if he confess guilt, to endeavour to bring him to repentance, than to proceed immediately to citation.

X. When an accused person, or a witness, refuses to obey the citation, he shall be cited a second time; and if he still continue to refuse, he shall be excluded from the communion of the church, for his contumacy, until he repent.

XI. Although, on the first citation, the person cited shall declare in writing, or otherwise, his fixed determination not to obey it; this declaration shall, in no case, induce the judicatory to deviate from the regular course prescribed for citations. They shall proceed as if no such declaration had been made. The person cited may afterwards alter his mind.

XII. The time which must elapse between the *first* citation of an accused person, or a witness, and the meeting of the judicatory at which he is to appear, is at least ten days. But the time allotted for his appearance in the *subsequent* citation, is left to the discretion of the judicatory; provided always, however, that it be not less than is quite sufficient for a seasonable and convenient compliance with the citation.

XIII. The second citation ought always to be accompanied with a notice, that if the person cited

do not appear at the time appointed, the judicatory, besides censuring him for his contumacy, will, after assigning some person to manage his defence, proceed to take the testimony in his case, as if he were present.

XIV. Judicatories before proceeding to trial, ought to ascertain that their citations have been duly served on the persons for whom they were intended, and especially before they proceed to ultimate measures for contumacy.

XV. The trial shall be fair and impartial. The witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused; or, at least, after he shall have received due citation to attend; and he shall be permitted to ask any questions tending to his own exculpation.

XVI. The judgment shall be regularly entered on the records of the judicatory: and the parties shall be allowed copies of the whole proceedings, at their own expense, if they demand them. And in case of references or appeals, the judicatory referring, or appealed from, shall send authentic copies of the whole process to the higher judicatory.

XVII. The person found guilty shall be admonished or rebuked, or excluded from church privileges, as the case shall appear to deserve, until he give satisfactory evidence of repentance.

XVIII. As cases may arise in which many days, or even weeks, may intervene before it is practicable to commence process against an accused church member, the session may, in such cases, and ought, if they think the edification of the church

requires it, to prevent the accused person from approaching the Lord's table until the charge against him can be examined.

XIX. The sentence shall be published only in the church or churches which have been offended. Or, if the offence be of small importance, and such as it shall appear most for edification not to publish, the sentence may pass only in the judicatory.

XX. Such gross offenders as will not be reclaimed by the private or public admonitions of the church, are to be cut off from its communion, agreeably to our Lord's direction, Mat. xviii. 17. And the apostolical injunction respecting the incestuous person. 1 Cor. v. 1—5.

XXI. No professional counsel shall be permitted to appear and plead in cases of process in any of our ecclesiastical courts. But if any accused person feel unable to represent and plead his own cause to advantage, he may request any Minister or Elder, belonging to the judicatory before which he appears, to prepare and exhibit his cause as he may judge proper. But the Minister or Elder so engaged, shall not be allowed, after pleading the cause of the accused, to sit in judgment as a member of the judicatory.

XXII. Questions of order which arise in the course of process, shall be decided by the Moderator. If an appeal is made from the chair, the question on the appeal shall be taken without debate.

XXIII. In recording the proceedings, in cases of judicial process, the reasons for all decisions,

except on questions of order, shall be recorded at length; that the record may exhibit every thing which had an influence on the judgment of the court. And nothing but what is contained in the record, may be taken into consideration in reviewing the proceedings in a superior court.

CHAPTER V.

Of process against a Bishop or Minister.

I. As the honour and success of the Gospel depend, in a great measure, on the character of its Ministers, each Presbytery ought, with the greatest care and impartiality to watch over the personal and professional conduct of all its members. But as, on the one hand, no Minister ought, on account of his office, to be screened from the hand of justice, nor his offences to be slightly censured; so neither ought scandalous charges to be received against him, by any judicatory, on slight grounds.

II. Process against a Gospel Minister shall always be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. And the same candour, caution, and general method, substituting only the Presbytery for the session, are to be observed in investigating charges against him, as are prescribed in the case of private members.

III. If it be found that the facts with which a Minister stands charged, happened without the bounds of his own Presbytery, that Presbytery shall

send notice to the Presbytery within whose bounds they did happen: and desire them either (if within convenient distance) to cite the witnesses to appear at the place of trial; or, (if the distance be so great as to render that inconvenient,) to take the examination themselves, and transmit an authentic record of their testimony: always giving due notice to the accused person of the time and place of such examination.

IV. Nevertheless, in case of a Minister being supposed to be guilty of a crime, or crimes, at such a distance from his usual place of residence, as that the offence is not likely to become otherwise known to the Presbytery to which he belongs; it shall, in such case, be the duty of the Presbytery within whose bounds the facts shall have happened, after satisfying themselves that there is probable ground of accusation, to send notice to the Presbytery of which he is a member, who are to proceed against him, and either send and take the testimony themselves, by a commission of their own body, or request the other Presbytery to take it for them, and transmit the same, properly authenticated.

V. Process against a Gospel Minister shall not be commenced, unless some person or persons, undertake to make out the charge; or unless common fame so loudly proclaims the scandal, that the Presbytery find it necessary for the honour of religion, to investigate the charge.

VI. As the success of the Gospel greatly depends upon the exemplary character of its Ministers, their soundness in the faith, and holy con-

versation; and as it is the duty of all Christians to be very cautious in taking up an ill report of any man, but especially of a Minister of the Gospel; therefore, if any man knows a Minister to be guilty of a private, censurable fault, he should warn him in private. But if the guilty person persist in his fault, or it become public, he who knows it, should apply to some other Bishop of the Presbytery for his advice in the case.

VII. The prosecutor of a Minister shall be previously warned, that if he fail to prove the charges, he must himself be censured as a slanderer of the Gospel Ministry, in proportion to the malignancy or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution.

VIII. When complaint is laid before the Presbytery, it must be reduced to writing; and nothing further is to be done at the first meeting, (unless by consent of parties,) than giving the Minister a full copy of the charges, with the names of the witnesses annexed; and citing all parties, and their witnesses, to appear and be heard at the next meeting; which meeting shall not be sooner than ten days after such citation.

IX. When a member of a church judicatory is under process, it shall be discretionary with the judicatory whether his privileges of deliberating and voting, as a member, in other matters, shall be suspended until the process is finally issued, or not.

X. At the next meeting of the Presbytery, the charges shall be read to him, and he shall be called upon to say whether he is guilty or not. If he confess, and the matter be base and flagitious; such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a

higher nature, however penitent he may appear, to the satisfaction of all, the Presbytery must, without delay, suspend him from the exercise of his office, or depose him from the ministry; and, if the way be clear for the purpose, appoint him a due time to confess publicly before the congregation offended, and to profess his penitence.

XI. If a Minister accused of atrocious crimes, being twice duly cited, shall refuse to attend the Presbytery, he shall be immediately suspended. And if, after another citation, he still refuse to attend the Presbytery, he shall be immediately suspended. And if, after another citation, he still refuse to attend, he shall be deposed as contumacious.

XII. If the Minister, when he appears, will not confess; but denies the facts alleged against him; if, on hearing the witnesses, the charges appear important, and well supported, the Presbytery must, nevertheless, censure him; and admonish, suspend, or depose him, according to the nature of the offence.

XIII. Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to infer deposition; but errors ought to be carefully considered; whether they strike at the vitals of religion, and are industriously spread; or, whether they arise from the weakness of the human understanding, and are not likely to do much injury.

XIV. A Minister under process for heresy or schism, should be treated with christian and brotherly tenderness. Frequent conferences ought to be held with him, and proper admonitions adminis-

tered. For some more dangerous errors, however, suspension may become necessary.

XV. If the Presbytery find, on trial, that the matter complained of, amounts to no more than such acts of infirmity as may be amended, and the people satisfied; so that little or nothing remains to hinder his usefulness, they shall take all prudent measures to remove the offence.

XVI. A Minister deposed for scandalous conduct, shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until after some time of eminent and exemplary, humble and edifying conversation, to heal the wound made by his scandal. And he ought in no case to be restored, until it shall appear, that the sentiments of the religious public are strongly in his favour, and demand his restoration.

XVII. As soon as a Minister is deposed, his congregation shall be declared vacant.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Witnesses.

I. JUDICATORIES ought to be very careful and impartial in receiving testimony. All persons are not *competent* as witnesses; and all who are competent are not *credible.*

II. A *competent* witness is one who ought to be admitted and heard. The competency of a witness may be affected by his want of the proper age; by a want of any of the senses essential to a

knowledge of the matter which he is called to establish; by weakness of understanding; by infamy of character; by being under church censure for falsehood or perjury; by nearness of relationship to any of the parties; and by a variety of considerations which can not be specified in detail.

III. Where there is room for doubt with regard to any of these points, either party has a right to challenge witnesses; and the judicatory shall candidly attend to the exceptions, and decide upon them.

IV. The *credibility* of a witness, or the degree of credit due to his testimony, may be affected by relationship to any of the parties; by deep interest in the result of the trial; by general rashness, indiscretion, or malignity of character; and by various other circumstances; to which judicatories shall carefully attend, and for which they shall make all proper allowance in their decision.

V. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against each other in any judicatory.

VI. The testimony of more than one witness is necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if several credible witnesses bear testimony to different *similar* acts, belonging to the same general charge, the crime shall be considered as proved.

VII. No witness, afterwards to be examined, except a member of the judicatory, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, unless by consent of parties.

VIII. To prevent confusion, witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them: then

cross-examined by the opposite party: after which any member of the judicatory, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. But no question shall be put or answered, except by permission of the moderator.

IX. The oath or affirmation to a witness, shall be administered by the moderator, in the following or like terms: "You solemnly promise, in the "presence of the omniscient and heart-searching "God, that you will declare the truth, the whole "truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the "best of your knowledge, in the matter in which "you are called to witness, as you shall answer it "to the great Judge of quick and dead."

X. Every question put to a witness shall, if required, be reduced to writing. When answered, it shall, together with the answer, be recorded, if deemed by either party of sufficient importance.

XI. The records of a judicatory, or any part of them, whether original or transcribed, if regularly authenticated by the moderator and clerk, or either of them, shall be deemed good and sufficient evidence in every other judicatory.

XII. In like manner, testimony taken by one judicatory, and regularly certified, shall be received by every other judicatory, as no less valid than if it had been taken by themselves.

XIII. Cases may arise in which it is not convenient for a judicatory to have the whole, or perhaps, any part of the testimony in a particular cause, taken in their presence. In this case a commission of the judicatory, consisting of two or three members may be appointed, and authorized

to proceed to the place where the witness or witnesses reside, and take the testimony in question, which shall be considered as if taken in the presence of the judicatory: of which commission, and of the time and place of their meeting, due notice shall be given to the opposite party, that he may have an opportunity of attending. And if the accused shall desire on his part, to take testimony at a distance for his own exculpation, he shall give notice to the judicatory of the time and place when it is proposed to take it, that a commission, as in the former case, may be appointed for the purpose.

XIV. When the witnesses have all been examined, the accused and the prosecutor shall have the privilege of commenting on their testimony to any reasonable extent.

XV. A member of the judicatory may be called upon to bear testimony in a case which comes before it. He shall be qualified as other witnesses are: and after having given his testimony, he may immediately resume his seat as a member of the judicatory.

XVI. A member of the church summoned as a witness, and refusing to appear, or, having appeared, refusing to give testimony, may be censured for contumacy, according to the circumstances of the case.

XVII. The testimony given by witnesses, must be faithfully recorded, and read to them, for their approbation or subscription.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Various Ways in which a Cause may be carried from a Lower Judicatory to a Higher.

I. In all governments conducted by men, wrong may be done, from ignorance, from prejudice, from malice, or from other causes. To prevent the continued existence of this wrong, is one great design of superior judicatories. And although there must be a last resort, beyond which there is no appeal; yet the security against permanent wrong will be as great as the nature of the case admits, when those who had no concern in the origin of the proceedings, are brought to review them, and to *annul* or *confirm* them, as they see cause; when a greater number of counsellors, are made to sanction the judgments, or to correct the errors, of a smaller; and finally, when the whole church is called to sit in judgment on the acts of a part.

II. Every kind of decision which is formed in any church judicatory, except the highest, is subject to the review of a superior judicatory, and may be carried before it in one or the other of the four following ways.

SECTION I.

GENERAL REVIEW AND CONTROL.

I. It is the duty of every judicatory above a church session, at least once a year, to review the

records of the proceedings of the judicatory next below. And if any lower judicatory shall omit to send up its records for this purpose, the higher may issue an order to produce them, either immediately, or at a particular time, as circumstances may require.

II. In reviewing the records of an inferior judicatory, it is proper to examine, FIRST, whether the proceedings have been constitutional and regular; SECONDLY, whether they have been wise, equitable, and for the edification of the church: THIRDLY, whether they have been correctly recorded.

III. In most cases the superior judicatory may be considered as fulfilling its duty, by simply recording, on its own minutes, the animadversion or censure which it may think proper to pass on records under review; and also by making an entry of the same in the book reviewed. But it may be that, in the course of review, cases of irregular proceedings may be found so disreputable and injurious as to demand the interference of the superior judicatory. In cases of this kind the inferior judicatory may be required to review and correct its proceedings.

IV. No judicial decision, however, of a judicatory shall be reversed, unless it be regularly brought up by appeal or complaint.

V. Judicatories may sometimes entirely neglect to perform their duty; by which neglect, heretical opinions, or corrupt practices, may be allowed to gain ground; or offenders of a very gross character may be suffered to escape; or some circumstances in their proceedings of very great irregularity, may

not be distinctly recorded by them. In any of which cases, their records will by no means exhibit to the superior judicatory, a full view of their proceedings. If, therefore, the superior judicatory be well advised, by *common fame*, that such neglects or irregularities have occurred on the part of the inferior judicatory, it is incumbent on them to take cognizance of the same; and to examine, deliberate, and judge in the whole matter, as completely as if it had been recorded, and thus brought up by the review of the records.

VI. When any important delinquency, or grossly unconstitutional proceedings appear in the records of any judicatory, or are charged against them by *common fame*, the first step to be taken by the judicatory next above, is to cite the judicatory alledged to have offended, to appear at a specified time and place, and to show what it has done, or failed to do, in the case in question: after which the judicatory thus issuing the citation, shall remit the whole matter to the delinquent judicatory, with a direction to take it up, and dispose of it in a constitutional manner, or stay all further proceedings in the case, as circumstances may require.

SECTION II.

OF REFERENCES.

I. A reference is a judicial representation, made by an inferior judicatory to a superior, of a case not

yet decided; which representation ought always to be in writing.

II. Cases which are new, important, difficult, of peculiar delicacy, the decision of which may establish principles or precedents of extensive influence, on which the sentiments of the inferior judicatory are greatly divided or on which, for any reason, it is highly desirable that a larger body should first decide, are proper subjects of reference.

III. References are either for mere advice, preparatory to a decision by the inferior judicatory; or for ultimate trial and decision by the superior.

IV. In the former case, the reference only *suspends* the decision of the judicatory from which it comes:—in the latter case, it totally relinquishes the decision, and submits the whole cause to the final judgment of the superior judicatory.

V. Although references may, in some cases, as before stated, be highly proper; yet it is, generally speaking, more conducive to the public good, that each judicatory should fulfil its duty, by exercising its judgment.

VI. Although a reference ought, generally, to procure advice from the superior judicatory; yet that judicatory is not necessarily bound to give a final judgment in the case, even if requested to do so; but may remit the whole cause, either with or without advice, back to the judicatory by which it was referred.

VII. In cases of reference, the members of the inferior judicatory making it, retain all the privileges of deliberating and voting, in the course of trial and judgment before the superior judicatory,

which they would have had, if no reference had been made.

VIII. References are, generally, to be carried to the judicatory immediately superior.

IX. In cases of reference, the judicatory referring ought to have all the testimony, and other documents, duly prepared, produced, and in perfect readiness; so that the superior judicatory may be able to consider and issue the case with as little difficulty or delay as possible.

SECTION III.

OF APPEALS.

I. An appeal is the removal of a cause already decided, from an inferior to a superior judicatory, by a party aggrieved.

II. All persons who have submitted to a regular trial, in an inferior, may appeal to a higher judicatory.

III. Any irregularity in the proceedings of the inferior judicatory; a refusal of reasonable indulgence to a party on trial; declining to receive important testimony; hurrying to a decision before the testimony is fully taken; a manifestation of prejudice in the case; and mistake or injustice in the decision—are all proper grounds of appeal.

IV. Appeals may be, either from a part of the proceedings of a judicatory, or from a definitive sentence.

V. Every appellant is bound to give notice of

his intention to appeal, and also to lay the reasons thereof, in writing, before the judicatory appealed from, either before its rising, or within ten days thereafter. If this notice, or these reasons, be not given to the judicatory, while in session, they shall be lodged with the moderator.

VI. Appeals are generally to be carried in regular gradation from an inferior judicatory to the one immediately superior.

VII. The appellant shall lodge his appeal, and the reasons of it with the clerk of the higher judicatory, before the close of the second day of their session.

VIII. In taking up an appeal, after ascertaining that the appellant, on his part, has conducted it regularly, the *first* step shall be to read the sentence appealed from: *secondly*, to read the reasons which were assigned by the appellant for his appeal, and which are on record: *thirdly*, to read the whole record of the proceedings of the inferior judicatory in the case, including all the testimony, and the reasons of their decision: *fourthly*, to hear the original parties: *fifthly*, to hear any of the members of the inferior judicatory, in explanation of the grounds of their decision, or of their dissent from it.

IX. After all the parties shall have been fully heard, and all the information gained by the members of the superior judicatory, from those of the inferior, which shall be deemed requisite, the original parties, and all the members of the inferior judicatory shall withdraw; when the clerk shall call the roll, that every member may have an op-

portunity to express his opinion on the case; after which the final vote shall be taken.

X. The decision may be either to confirm or reverse, in whole, or in part, the decision of the inferior judicatory; or to remit the cause, for the purpose of amending the record, should it appear to be incorrect or defective; or for a new trial.

XI. If an appellant, after entering his appeal to a superior judicatory, fail to prosecute it, it shall be considered as abandoned, and the sentence appealed from shall be final. And an appellant shall be considered as abandoning his appeal, if he do not appear before the judicatory appealed to, on the first or second day of its meeting, next ensuing the date of his notice of appeal. Except in cases in which the appellant can make it appear that he was prevented from seasonably prosecuting his appeal, by the providence of God.

XII. Members of judicatories appealed from, can not be allowed to vote in the superior judicatory, on any question connected with the appeal.

XIII. If the members of the inferior judicatory, in case of a sentence appealed from, appear to have acted according to the best of their judgment, and with good intention, they incur no censure, although their sentence be reversed. Yet, if they appear to have acted irregularly or corruptly, they shall be censured as the case may require.

XIV. If an appellant is found to manifest a litigious or other unchristian spirit, in the prosecution of his appeal, he shall be censured, according to the degree of his offence.

XV. The necessary operation of an appeal is

to suspend all further proceedings on the ground of the sentence appealed from. But, if a sentence of suspension, or excommunication from church privileges, or of deposition from office, be the sentence appealed from, it shall be considered as in force until the appeal shall be issued.

XVI. It shall always be deemed the duty of the judicatory, whose judgment is appealed from, to send authentic copies of all their records, and of the whole testimony, relating to the matter of the appeal. And if any judicatory shall neglect its duty in this respect; especially, if thereby an appellant, who has conducted with regularity on his part, is deprived of the privilege of having his appeal seasonably issued; such judicatory shall be censured, according to the circumstances of the case.

XVII. An appeal shall in no case be entered, except by one of the original parties.

SECTION IV.

OF COMPLAINTS.

I. ANOTHER method by which a cause which has been decided by an inferior judicatory, may be carried before a superior, is by complaint.

II. A complaint is a representation made to a superior, by any member or members of a minority of an inferior judicatory, or by any other person or persons, respecting a decision by an infe-

rior judicatory, which, in the opinion of the complainants, has been irregularly or unjustly made.

III. The cases in which complaint is proper and advisable, are such as the following, viz. The judgment of an inferior judicatory may be favourable to the only party who has been placed at their bar; or the judgment in question may do no wrong to any individual; or the party who is aggrieved by it may decline the trouble of conducting an appeal. In any of these cases no appeal is to be expected. And yet the judgment may appear to some of the members of the judicatory, to be contrary to the constitution of the church, injurious to the interests of religion, and calculated to degrade the character of those who have pronounced it. In this case the minority have not only a right to record in the minutes of the judicatory, their dissent from this judgment, or their protest against it, but they have also a right to complain to the superior judicatory.

IV. Notice of a complaint shall always be given before the rising of the judicatory, or within ten days thereafter, as in the case of an appeal.

V. This complaint brings the whole proceedings in the case under the review of the superior judicatory; and if the complaint appears to be well founded, it may have the effect not only of drawing down censure upon those who concurred in the judgment complained of; but also of reversing that judgment, and placing matters in the same situation in which they were before the judgment was pronounced.

VI. In cases of complaint, however, as in those

of appeal, the reversal of a judgment of an inferior judicatory, is not necessarily connected with censure on that judicatory.

VII. None of the members of the judicatory whose act is complained of, can vote in the superior judicatory, on any question connected with the complaint.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Dissents and Protests.

I. A dissent is a declaration on the part of one or more members of a minority, in a judicatory, expressing a different opinion from that of the majority in a particular case. A dissent, unaccompanied with reasons, is always entered on the records of the judicatory.

II. A protest is a more solemn and formal declaration, made by members of a minority as beforementioned, bearing their testimony against what they deem a mischievous or erroneous judgment; and is generally accompanied with a detail of the reasons on which it is founded.

III. If a protest or dissent be couched in decent and respectful language, and contains no offensive reflections or insinuations against the majority of the judicatory, those who offer it have a right to have it recorded in the minutes.

IV. A dissent or protest may be accompanied with a complaint to a superior judicatory, or not,

at the pleasure of those who offer it. If not thus accompanied, it is simply left to speak for itself, when the records containing it, come to be reviewed by the superior judicatory.

V. It may sometimes happen that a protest, though not infringing the rules of decorum, either in its language or matter, may impute to the judicatory whose judgment it opposes, some principles or reasonings which it never adopted. In this case the majority of the judicatory may with propriety appoint a committee to draw up an answer to the protest, which, after being adopted as the act of the judicatory, ought to be inserted on the records.

VI. When, in such a case, the answer of the majority is brought in, those who entered their protest, may be of the opinion that fidelity to their cause, calls upon them to make a reply to the answer. This, however, ought by no means to be admitted; as the majority might, of course, rejoin, and litigation might be perpetuated, to the great inconvenience and disgrace of the judicatory.

VII. When, however, those who have protested, consider the answer of the majority as imputing to them opinions or conduct which they disavow; the proper course is, to ask leave to take back their protest, and modify it in such manner as to render it more agreeable to their views. This alteration may lead to a corresponding alteration in the answer of the majority; with which the whole affair ought to terminate.

VIII. None can join in a protest against a de-

cision of any judicatory, excepting those who had a right to vote in said decision.

CHAPTER IX.

New Testimony.

I. If, after a trial before any judicatory, new testimony be discovered, which is supposed to be highly important to the exculpation of the accused, it is proper for him to ask, and for the judicatory to grant a new trial.

II. It sometimes happens, in the prosecution of appeals, that testimony, which had not been exhibited before the inferior judicatory, is represented to exist, and to be of considerable importance in the case.

III. Representations of this kind ought not to be lightly, or of course, sustained. But the superior judicatory ought to be well satisfied, that the alleged testimony is of real importance, before they determine to put the inferior judicatory to the trouble of a new trial.

IV. When such testimony, therefore, is alleged to exist, either by the appellant, or the judicatory appealed from, it will be proper for the superior judicatory to inquire into the nature and import of the testimony; what is intended to be proved by it; and, whether there is any probability that it will really establish the point intended to be established.

V. If it appear that the fact proposed to be established by the new testimony is important; that is, if it appear to be such a fact as, if proved, would materially alter the aspect of the cause: and if there be any probability that the testimony in question will be sufficient to establish the alleged fact; then the superior judicatory ought to send the cause back to the inferior for a new trial.

VI. Cases may arise, however, in which the judicatory appealed from, and the appellant, may concur in requesting the superior judicatory to take up and issue the appeal, with the additional light which the new evidence may afford. In this case, and especially if very serious injury is likely to happen, either to the appellant, or to the church, by the delay which a new trial would occasion, the superior judicatory may proceed to hear the new testimony, and to issue the appeal, with the aid of the additional light which that testimony may afford.

VII. When, however, the judgment of the inferior judicatory is reversed; and it is apparent that the new testimony had considerable influence in procuring the reversal; it ought to be so stated in the decision of the superior judicatory: inasmuch as it would be injustice to the inferior judicatory to reverse their decision, upon grounds which were never before them, without explaining the fact.

CHAPTER X.

Jurisdiction.

I. When a member shall be dismissed from one church, with a view to his joining another; if he commit an offence previous to his joining the latter, he shall be considered as under the jurisdiction of the church which dismissed him, and amenable to it, up to the time when he actually becomes connected with that to which he was dismissed and recommended.

II. The same principle applies to a Minister; who is always to be considered as remaining under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery which dismissed him, until he actually becomes a member of another.

III. If, however, either a Minister, or a private member, shall be charged with a crime which appears to have been committed during the interval between the date of his dismission, and his actually joining the new body, but which did not come to light until after he had joined the new body, that body shall be empowered and bound to conduct the process against him.

IV. No Presbytery shall dismiss a Minister, or licentiate, or candidate for licensure, without specifying the particular Presbytery, or other ecclesiastical body, with which he is to be connected.

CHAPTER XI.

Limitation of time.

I. When any member shall remove from one congregation to another, he shall produce satisfactory testimonials of his church membership and dismission, before he be admitted as a regular member of that church: unless the church to which he removes, has other satisfactory means of information.

II. No certificate of church membership shall be considered as valid testimony of the good standing of the bearer, if it be more than one year old, except where there has been no opportunity of presenting it to a church.

III. When persons remove to a distance, and neglect for a considerable time, to apply for testimonials of dismission, and good standing, the testimonials given them shall testify to their character only up to the time of their removal, unless the judicatory have good information of a more recent date.

IV. If a church member have been more than two years absent from the place of his ordinary residence and ecclesiastical connections, if he apply for a certificate of membership, his absence, and the ignorance of the church respecting his demeanor for that time, shall be distinctly stated in the certificate.

V. Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the crime shall

have been committed; unless it shall have recently become flagrant. It may happen, however, that a church member, after removing to a place far distant from his former residence, and where his connection with the church is unknown, may commit a crime, on account of which process cannot be instituted within the time above specified. In all such cases, the recent discovery of the church membership of the individual, shall be considered as equivalent to the crime itself having recently become flagrant. The same principle also applies to Ministers if similar circumstances should occur.

THE

DIRECTORY

*For the Worship of God in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,**

AS AMENDED AND RATIFIED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MAY, 1821.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Sanctification of the Lord's Day.

I. It is the duty of every person to remember the Lord's day; and to prepare for it, before its approach. All worldly business should be so ordered, and seasonably laid aside, as that we may not be hindered thereby from sanctifying the sabbath, as the holy scriptures require.

II. The whole day is to be kept holy to the Lord; and to be employed in the public and private exercises of religion. Therefore, it is requi-

* The scripture-warrant for what is specified in the various articles of this directory, will be found at large in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in the places where the subjects are treated in a doctrinal form.

site, that there be an holy resting, all the day, from unnecessary labours; and an abstaining from those recreations, which may be lawful on other days; and also, as much as possible, from worldly thoughts and conversation.

III. Let the provisions, for the support of the family on that day, be so ordered, that servants or others be not improperly detained from the public worship of God; nor hindered from sanctifying the sabbath.

IV. Let every person and family, in the morning, by secret and private prayer, for themselves and others, especially for the assistance of God to their minister, and for a blessing upon his ministry, by reading the scriptures, and by holy meditation, prepare for communion with God in his public ordinances.

V. Let the people be careful to assemble at the appointed time; that, being all present at the beginning, they may unite, with one heart, in all the parts of public worship: and let none unnecessarily depart, till after the blessing be pronounced.

VI. Let the time after the solemn services of the congregation in public are over, be spent in reading, meditation, repeating of sermons, catechising, religious conversation, prayer for a blessing upon the public ordinances, the singing of psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs;—visiting the sick, relieving the poor, and in performing such like duties of piety, charity and mercy.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Assembling of the Congregation, and their Behaviour during Divine Service.

I. When the time appointed for public worship is come, let the people enter the church, and take their seats in a decent, grave, and reverent manner.

II. In time of public worship, let all the people attend with gravity and reverence; forbearing to read any thing, except what the minister is then reading or citing; abstaining from all whisperings; from salutations of persons present, or coming in; and from gazing about, sleeping, smiling, and all other indecent behaviour.

CHAPTER III.

Of the public Reading of the Holy Scriptures.

I. The reading of the holy scriptures, in the congregation, is a part of the public worship of God, and ought to be performed by the ministers and teachers.

II. The holy scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, shall be publicly read, from the most approved translation, in the vulgar tongue, that all may hear and understand.

III. How large a portion shall be read at once, is left to the discretion of every minister: however,

in each service, he ought to read, at least, one chapter; and more, when the chapters are short, or the connection requires it. He may, when he thinks it expedient, expound any part of what is read: always having regard to the time, that neither reading, singing, praying, preaching, or any other ordinance, be disproportionate the one to the other; nor the whole rendered too short, or too tedious.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Singing of Psalms.

I. It is the duty of Christians to praise God, by singing of psalms, or hymns, publicly in the church, as also privately in the family.

II. In singing the praises of God, we are to sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also; making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. It is also proper, that we cultivate some knowledge of the rules of music; that we may praise God in a becoming manner with our voices, as well as with our hearts.

III. The whole congregation should be furnished with books, and ought to join in this part of worship. It is proper to sing without parcelling out the psalm, line by line. The practice of reading the psalm, line by line, was introduced in times of ignorance, when many in the congregation could not read: therefore, it is recommended, that it be laid aside, as far as convenient.

IV. The proportion of the time of public worship to be spent in singing, is left to the prudence of every minister: but it is recommended, that more time be allowed for this excellent part of divine service, than has been usual in most of our churches.

CHAPTER V.

Of Public Prayer.

It seems very proper to begin the public worship of the sanctuary by a short prayer; humbly adoring the infinite majesty of the living God; expressing a sense of our distance from him as creatures, and unworthiness as sinners; and humbly imploring his gracious presence, the assistance of his holy Spirit in the duties of his worship, and his acceptance of us through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

II. Then, after singing a psalm, or hymn, it is proper that, before sermon, there should be a full, and comprehensive prayer. *First*, Adoring the glory and perfections of God, as they are made known to us in the works of creation, in the conduct of providence, and in the clear, and full revelation he hath made of himself in his written word. *Second*, Giving thanks to him for all his mercies of every kind, general and particular, spiritual and temporal, common and special, above all for Christ Jesus his unspeakable gift, and the hope of eternal life through him. *Third*, Mak-

ing humble confession of sin, both original and actual; acknowledging, and endeavouring to impress the mind of every worshipper, with a deep sense of the evil of all sin, as such; as being a departure from the living God; and also taking a particular and affecting view of the various fruits which proceed from this root of bitterness:—as sins against God, our neighbour, and ourselves; sins in thought, in word, and in deed; sins secret and presumptuous; sins accidental and habitual. Also, the aggravations of sin, arising from knowledge, or the means of it; from distinguishing mercies; from valuable privileges; from breach of vows, &c. *Fourth*, Making earnest supplication for the pardon of sin, and peace with God, through the blood of the atonement, with all its important and happy fruits; for the Spirit of sanctification, and abundant supplies of the grace that is necessary to the discharge of our duty: for support and comfort, under all the trials to which we are liable, as we are sinful and mortal; and for all temporal mercies, that may be necessary in our passage through this valley of tears. Always remembering to view them as flowing in the channel of covenant love, and intended to be subservient to the preservation and progress of the spiritual life. *Fifth*, Pleading from every principle warranted in scripture; from our own necessity; the all-sufficiency of God; the merit and intercession of our Saviour, and the glory of God in the comfort and happiness of his people. *Sixth*, Intercession for others, including the whole world of mankind; the kingdom of Christ; or his church universal; the church or churches with

which we are more particularly connected; the interest of human society in general, and in that community to which we immediately belong; all that are invested with civil authority; the ministers of the everlasting gospel; and the rising generation: with whatever else, more particular, may seem necessary, or suitable, to the interest of that congregation where divine worship is celebrated.

III. Prayer, after sermon, ought generally to have a relation to the subject that has been treated of in the discourse; and all other public prayers, to the circumstances that gave occasion for them.

IV. It is easy to perceive, that in all the preceding directions there is a very great compass and variety; and it is committed to the judgment and fidelity of the officiating pastor to insist chiefly on such parts, or to take in more or less of the several parts, as he shall be led to by the aspect of providence; the particular state of the congregation in which he officiates; or the disposition and exercise of his own heart at the time. But we think it necessary to observe, that although we do not approve, as is well known, of confining ministers to set, or fixed forms of prayer for public worship; yet it is the indispensable duty of every minister, previously to his entering on his office, to prepare and qualify himself for this part of his duty, as well as for preaching. He ought, by a thorough acquaintance with the holy scriptures, by reading the best writers on the suject, by meditation, and by a life of communion with God in secret, to endeavour to acquire both the spirit and the gift of prayer. Not only so, but when he is to

enter on particular acts of worship, he should endeavour to compose his spirit, and to digest his thoughts for prayer, that it may be performed with dignity and propriety, as well as to the profit of those who join in it; and that he may not disgrace that important service by mean, irregular, or extravagant effusions.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Preaching of the Word.

I. The preaching of the word being an institution of God for the salvation of men, great attention should be paid to the manner of performing it. Every minister ought to give diligent application to it; and endeavour to prove himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth.

II. The subject of a sermon should be some verse, or verses of scripture; and its object, to explain, defend, and apply some part of the system of divine truth; or, to point out the nature, and state the bounds and obligation of some duty. A text should not be merely a motto, but should fairly contain the doctrine proposed to be handled. It is proper also that large portions of scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the sacred oracles.

III. The method of preaching requires much study, meditation and prayer. Ministers ought, in

general, to prepare their sermons with care; and not to indulge themselves in loose, extemporary harangues; nor to serve God with that which cost them nought. They ought, however, to keep to the simplicity of the gospel; expressing themselves in language agreeable to scripture, and level to the understanding of the meanest of their hearers; carefully avoiding ostentation, either of parts or learning. They ought also to adorn, by their lives, the doctrine which they teach; and to be examples to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

IV. As one primary design of public ordinances is to pay social acts of homage to the *most high God*, ministers ought to be careful, not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with, or exclude the more important duties of prayer and praise; but preserve a just proportion between the several parts of public worship.

V. The sermon being ended, the minister is to pray, and return thanks to almighty God: then let a psalm be sung; a collection raised for the poor, or other purposes of the church; and the assembly dismissed with the apostolic benediction.

VI. It is expedient that no person be introduced to preach in any of the churches under our care, unless by the consent of the pastor or church session.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Administration of Baptism.

I. BAPTISM is not to be unnecessarily delayed; nor to be administered, in any case, by any private

person; but by a minister of Christ, called to be the steward of the mysteries of God.

II. It is usually to be administered in the church, in the presence of the congregation; and it is convenient that it be performed immediately after sermon.

III. After previous notice is given to the minister, the child to be baptized is to be presented, by one or both the parents signifying their desire that the child may be baptized.

IV. Before baptism, let the minister use some words of instruction, respecting the institution, nature, use, and ends of this ordinance: showing,

"That it is instituted by Christ; that it is a seal "of the righteousness of faith; that the seed of the "faithful have no less a right to this ordinance, un- "der the gospel, than the seed of Abraham to cir- "cumcision, under the Old Testament; that Christ "commanded all nations to be baptized; that he "blessed little children, declaring that of such is "the kingdom of heaven; that children are federal- "ly holy, and therefore ought to be baptized; that "we are, by nature, sinful, guilty, and polluted, "and have need of cleansing by the blood of "Christ, and by the sanctifying influences of the "Spirit of God."

The minister is also to exhort the parents to the careful performance of their duty: requiring,

"That they teach the child to read the word of "God; that they instruct it in the principles of our "holy religion, as contained in the scriptures of the "Old and New Testament; an excellent summary "of which we have in the confession of faith of

"this church, and in the larger and shorter cate-
"chisms of the Westminster assembly, which are
"to be recommended to them, as adopted by this
"church, for their direction and assistance, in the
"discharge of this important duty; that they pray
"with and for it; that they set an example of piety
"and godliness before it; and endeavour, by all the
"means of God's appointment, to bring up their
"child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

V. Then the minister is to pray for a blessing to attend this ordinance; after which, calling the child by its name, he shall say,

"I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and
"of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize the child with water, by pouring or sprinkling it on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony: and the whole shall be concluded with prayer.

Although it is proper that baptism be administered in the presence of the congregation; yet there may be cases, when it will be expedient to administer this ordinance in private houses; of which the minister is to be the judge.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

I. The communion, or supper of the Lord, is to be celebrated frequently; but how often, may be determined by the minister and eldership of

each congregation, as they may judge most for edification.

II. The ignorant and scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper.

III. It is proper that public notice should be given to the congregation, at least, the sabbath before the administration of this ordinance, and that, either then, or on some day of the week, the people be instructed in its nature, and a due preparation for it; that all may come in a suitable manner to this holy feast.

IV. When the sermon is ended, the minister shall show,

"That this is an ordinance of Christ; by reading the words of institution, either from one of the evangelists, or from 1 Cor. xi. *chapter;* which, as to him may appear expedient, he may explain and apply; that it is to be observed in remembrance of Christ, to show forth his death till he come; that it is of inestimable benefit, to strengthen his people against sin; to support them under troubles; to encourage and quicken them in duty; to inspire them with love and zeal; to increase their faith, and holy resolution; and to beget peace of conscience, and comfortable hopes of eternal life."

He is to warn the profane, the ignorant, and scandalous, and those that secretly indulge themselves in any known sin, not to approach the holy table. On the other hand, he shall invite to this holy table, such as, sensible of their lost and helpless state by sin, depend upon the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance with God; such

as, being instructed in the gospel doctrine, have a competent knowledge to discern the Lord's body; and such as desire to renounce their sins, and are determined to lead a holy and godly life.

V. The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, the bread in convenient dishes, and the wine in cups, and the communicants orderly and gravely sitting around the table, (or in their seats before it) in the presence of the minister; let him set the elements apart, by prayer and thanksgiving.

The bread and wine being thus set apart by prayer and thanksgiving, the minister is to take the bread, and break it, in the view of the people, saying in expressions of this sort,

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the same night in "which he was betrayed, having taken bread, and "blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples; "as I, ministering in his name, give this bread un- "to you; saying, [here the bread is to be distri- "buted] Take, eat: this is my body, which is "broken for you: this do in remembrance of "me."

After having given bread, he shall take the cup, and say,

"After the same manner our Saviour also took "the cup; and having given thanks, as hath "been done in his name, he gave it to the dis- "ciples; saying, [while the minister is repeating "these words let him give the cup] This cup is "the New Testament in my blood, which is shed "for many, for the remission of sins: drink ye all "of it."

The minister himself is to communicate, at such time as may appear to him most convenient.

The minister may, in a few words, put the communicants in mind,

"Of the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, held "forth in this sacrament; and of their obligation "to be the Lord's; and may exhort them, to walk "worthy of the vocation wherewith they are call-"ed; and, as they have professedly received Christ "Jesus the Lord, that they be careful so to walk "in him, and to maintain good works."

It may not be improper for the minister to give a word of exhortation also to those who have been only spectators, reminding them,

"Of their duty; stating their sin and danger, "by living in disobedience to Christ, in neglect-"ing this holy ordinance; and calling upon them "to be earnest in making preparation for attend-"ing upon it, at the next time of its celebra-"tion."

Then the minister is to pray and give thanks to God,

"For his rich mercy, and invaluable goodness, "vouchsafed to them in that sacred communion; "to implore pardon for the defects of the whole "service; and to pray for the acceptance of their "persons and performances; for the gracious as-"sistance of the Holy Spirit, to enable them, as "they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to "walk in him; that they may hold fast that which "they have received, that no man take their "crown; that their conversation may be as be-

" cometh the gospel; that they may bear about " with them, continually, the dying of the Lord " Jesus; that the life also of Jesus may be mani- " fested in their mortal body; that their light may " so shine before men, that others, seeing their " good works, may glorify their Father, who is in " heaven."

The collection, for the poor, and to defray the expense of the elements, may be made after this; or at such other time as may seem meet to the eldership.

Now let a psalm or hymn be sung, and the congregation dismissed, with the following or some other gospel benediction;

" Now the God of peace, that brought again " from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shep- " herd of the sheep, through the blood of the " everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every " good work to do his will, working in you that " which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Je- " sus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. " *Amen.*"

VI. As it has been customary, in some parts of our church, to observe a fast before the Lord's supper; to have sermon on Saturday and Monday; and to invite two or three ministers, on such occasions; and as these seasons have been blessed to many souls, and may tend to keep up a stricter union of ministers and congregations; we think it not improper, that they, who choose it, may continue in this practice.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Admission of Persons to Sealing Ordinances.

I. CHILDREN, born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church; and are to be taught to read, and repeat the catechism, the apostles' creed, and the Lord's prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And, when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed, it is their duty, and their privilege, to come to the Lord's supper.

II. The years of discretion, in young Christians, can not be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership. The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances; and of the time when it is proper to admit young Christians to them.

III. Those who are to be admitted to sealing ordinances, shall be examined, as to their knowledge and piety.

IV. When unbaptized persons apply for admission into the church, they shall, in ordinary cases, after giving satisfaction with respect to their knowledge and piety, make a public profession of their faith, in the presence of the congregation; and thereupon be baptized.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Mode of inflicting Church Censures.

I. The power which Christ hath given the rulers of his church, is for edification, and not for destruction. As, in the preaching of the word, the wicked are, doctrinally, separated from the good; so, by discipline, the church authoritatively makes a distinction between the holy and the profane. In this she acts the part of a tender mother, correcting her children only for their good, that every one of them may be presented faultless, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

II. When any member of the church shall have been guilty of a fault, deserving censure, the judicatory shall proceed with all tenderness, and restore their offending brother in the spirit of meekness; considering themselves, lest they also be tempted. Censure ought to be inflicted with great solemnity; that it may be the means of impressing the mind of the delinquent with a proper sense of his danger, while he stands excluded from the privileges of the church of the living God; and that, with the divine blessing, it may lead him to repentance.

III. When the judicatory has resolved to pass sentence, suspending a member from church privileges, the moderator shall address him, to the following purpose:

"Whereas you are guilty [by your own confes-
"sion, or convicted by sufficient proof as the case

" may be,] of the sin of [here mention the parti-
" cular offence] we declare you suspended from
" the sacraments of the church; till you give satis-
" factory evidence of the sincerity of your repent-
" ance." To this shall be added such advice, admonition, or rebuke as may be judged necessary; and the whole shall be concluded by prayer to almighty God, that he would follow this act of discipline with his blessing. We judge it prudent, in general, that such censures be inflicted in the presence of the judicatory only; but, if any church think it expedient to rebuke the offender publicly, this solemn suspension from the sacraments may be in the presence of the congregation.

IV. After any person hath been thus suspended from the sacraments, it is proper that the minister and elders and other Christians should frequently converse with him, as well as pray for him in private, that it would please God to give him repentance. And it may be requisite likewise, particularly on days preparatory to the dispensing of the Lord's supper, that the prayers of the church be offered up for those unhappy persons who, by their wickedness, have shut themselves out from this holy communion.

V. When the judicatory shall be satisfied, as to the reality of the repentance of any offender, he shall be admitted to profess his repentance; and be restored to the privileges of the church. Which restoration shall be declared to the penitent in the presence of the session, or of the congregation, and followed with prayer and thanksgiving.

VI. When any offender has been adjudged to

be cut off from the communion of the church, it is proper that the sentence be publicly pronounced against him.

VII. The design of excommunication is, to operate upon the offender as a means of reclaiming him; to deliver the church from the scandal of his offence; and to inspire all with fear, by the example of his punishment.

The minister shall give the church or congregation a short narrative of the several steps which have been taken with respect to their offending brother, and inform them, that it has been found necessary to cut him off from the communion; and shall in the presence of the church or congregation, pronounce this sentence in the following or like form: viz.

He shall begin by showing the authority of the church to cast out unworthy members, from Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18; 1 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; and shall briefly explain the nature, use, and consequences of this censure; warning the people to avoid all unnecessary intercourse with him who is cast out.

Then he shall say,

"Whereas A. B. hath been, by sufficient proof, "convicted of [here insert the sin,] and after "much admonition and prayer, obstinately refus- "eth to hear the church, and hath manifested no "evidence of repentance; therefore, in the name, "and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I "pronounce him to be excluded from the commu- "nion of the church."

After which prayer shall be made that the

blessing of God may follow his ordinance for the conviction and reformation of the excommunicated person, and for the establishment of all true believers.

VIII. When one who hath been excommunicated shall be so affected with his state as to be brought to repentance, and to desire to be re-admitted to the privileges of the church; the session, having obtained sufficient evidence of his sincere penitence, shall, with the advice and concurrence of the presbytery, restore him. In order to which, the minister shall, on two Lord's days previous thereto, inform the congregation of the measures which have been taken with the excommunicated person, and of the resolution of the session to receive him again to the communion of the Church.

On the day appointed for his restoration, when the other parts of divine service are ended, before pronouncing the blessing, the minister shall call upon the excommunicated person, and propose to him in the presence of the congregation, the following questions:

"Do you, from a deep sense of your great wickedness, freely confess your sin, in thus rebelling against God, and in refusing to hear his church; and do you acknowledge that you have been in justice and mercy cut off from the communion of the saints? *Answer*, I do. Do you now voluntarily profess your sincere repentance and deep contrition, for your sin and obstinacy; and do you humbly ask the forgiveness of God, and of his church? *Answer*, I do. Do you sincerely promise, through divine grace, to live in all

"humbleness of mind and circumspection; and to "endeavour to adorn the doctrine of God our Sa- "viour, by having your conversation as becometh "the gospel? *Answer*, I do."

Here the minister shall give the penitent a suitable exhortation, addressing him in the bowels of brotherly love, encouraging and comforting him. Then he shall pronounce the sentence of restoration, in the following words:

"Whereas you, A. B. have been shut out from "the communion of the faithful, but have now ma- "nifested such repentance as satisfies the church: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by "his authority, I declare you absolved from the "sentence of excommunication formerly denounc- "ed against you; and I do receive you into the "communion of the church, that you may be a "partaker of all the benefits of the Lord Jesus, to "your eternal salvation."

The whole shall be concluded with prayer, and the people dismissed with the usual blessing.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Solemnization of Marriage.

I. MARRIAGE is not a sacrament; nor peculiar to the church of Christ. It is proper that every commonwealth, for the good of society, make laws to regulate marriage; which all citizens are bound to obey.

II. Christians ought to marry in the Lord: therefore it is fit that their marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister; that special instruction may be given them, and suitable prayers made, when they enter into this relation.

III. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman only: and they are not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity prohibited by the word of God.

IV. The parties ought to be of such years of discretion as to be capable of making their own choice: and if they be under age, or live with their parents, the consent of the parents or others, under whose care they are, ought to be previously obtained, and well certified to the minister, before he proceeds to solemnize the marriage.

V. Parents ought neither to compel their children to marry contrary to their inclinations, nor deny their consent without just and important reasons.

VI. Marriage is of a public nature. The welfare of civil society, the happiness of families, and the credit of religion, are deeply interested in it. Therefore the purpose of marriage ought to be sufficiently published a proper time, previously to the solemnization of it. It is enjoined on all ministers to be careful that, in this matter, they neither transgress the laws of God, nor the laws of the community: and that they may not destroy the peace and comfort of families, they must be properly certified with respect to the parties applying to them, that no just objections lie against their marriage.

VII. Marriage must always be performed before a competent number of witnesses; and at any time except on a day of public humiliation. And we advise that it be not on the Lord's day. And the minister is to give a certificate of the marriage when required.

VIII. When the parties present themselves for marriage, the minister is to desire if there is any person present who knows any lawful reason why these persons may not be joined together in the marriage-relation, that they will now make it known, or ever after hold their peace.

No objections being made, he is then severally to address himself to the parties to be married, in the following or like words:

"You, the man, declare, in the presence of God, "that you do not know any reason by pre-contract "or otherwise, why you may not lawfully marry "this woman."

Upon his declaring he does not, the minister shall address himself to the bride, in the same or similar terms:

"You, the woman, declare, in the presence of "God, that you do not know any reason, by pre-"contract or otherwise, why you may not lawfully "marry this man."

Upon her declaring she does not, he is to begin with prayer for the presence and blessing of God.

The minister shall then proceed to give them some instruction, from the scriptures, respecting the institution and duties of this state, showing,

"That God hath instituted marriage for the "comfort and happiness of mankind, in declaring

" a man shall forsake his father and mother and " cleave unto his wife; and that marriage is hon- " ourable in all; that he hath appointed various " duties, which are incumbent upon those who enter " into this relation; such as, a high esteem and " mutual love for one another; bearing with each " other's infirmities and weaknesses, to which hu- " man nature is subject in its present lapsed state; " to encourage each other under the various ills of " life; to comfort one another in sickness; in hones- " ty and industry to provide for each other's tem- " poral support; to pray for and encourage one " another, in the things which pertain to God, and " to their immortal souls; and to live together as " the heirs of the grace of life."

Then the minister shall cause the bridegroom and bride to join their hands, and shall pronounce the marriage covenant, first to the man, in these words:

" You take this woman, whom you hold by the " hand, to be your lawful and married wife; and " you promise, and covenant, in the presence of " God and these witnesses, that you will be unto " her a loving and faithful husband, until you shall " be separated by death."

The bridegroom shall express his consent, by saying, " Yes, I do."

Then the minister shall address himself to the woman, in these words:

" You take this man, whom you hold by the " hand, to be your lawful and married husband; " and you promise, and covenant, in the presence " of God and these witnesses, that you will be unto

"him a loving, faithful, and obedient wife, until "you shall be separated by death."

The bride shall express her consent, by saying, "Yes, I do."

Then the minister is to say:

"I pronounce you husband and wife, according "to the ordinance of God; whom therefore God "hath joined together let no man put asunder."

After this the minister may exhort them, in a few words, to the mutual discharge of their duty.

Then let him conclude with prayer suitable to the occasion.

Let the minister keep a proper register for the names of all persons whom he marries, and of the time of their marriage, for the perusal of all whom it may concern.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Visitation of the Sick.

I. When persons are sick, it is their duty, before their strength and understanding fail them, to send for their minister, and to make known to him, with prudence, their spiritual state; or to consult him on the concerns of their precious souls. And it is his duty to visit them, at their request, and to apply himself, with all tenderness and love, to administer spiritual good to their immortal souls.

II. He shall instruct the sick out of the scriptures, that diseases arise not out of the ground, nor do they come by chance; but that they are directed

and sent by a wise and holy God, either for correction of sin, for the trial of grace, for improvement in religion, or for other important ends: and that they shall work together for good to all those who make a wise improvement of God's visitation, neither despising his chastening hand, nor fainting under his rebukes.

III. If the minister finds the sick person to be grossly ignorant, he shall instruct him in the nature of repentance and faith, and the way of acceptance with God, through the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ.

IV. He shall exhort the sick to examine himself; to search his heart, and try his former ways, by the word of God; and shall assist him, by mentioning some of the obvious marks and evidences of sincere piety.

V. If the sick shall signify any scruple, doubt, or temptation, under which he labours, the minister must endeavour to resolve his doubts, and administer instruction and direction, as the case may seem to require.

VI. If the sick appear to be a stupid, thoughtless, and hardened sinner, he shall endeavour to awaken his mind; to arouse his conscience; to convince him of the evil and danger of sin; of the curse of the law, and the wrath of God due to sinners; to bring him to a humble and penitential sense of his iniquities; and to state before him the fulness of the grace and mercy of God, in and through the glorious Redeemer; the absolute necessity of faith and repentance, in order to his being interested in

the favour of God, or his obtaining everlasting happiness.

VII. If the sick person shall appear to have knowledge, to be of a tender conscience, and to have been endeavouring to serve God in uprightness, though not without many failings and sinful infirmities; or if his spirit be broken with a sense of sin, or through apprehensions of the want of the divine favour; then it will be proper to administer consolation and encouragement to him, by setting before him the freeness and riches of the grace of God, the all-sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ, and the supporting promises of the gospel.

VIII. The minister must endeavour to guard the sick person against ill-grounded persuasions of the mercy of God, without a vital union to Christ; and against unreasonable fears of death, and desponding discouragements; against presumption upon his own goodness and merit, upon the one hand, and against despair of the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ, on the other.

IX. In one word, it is the minister's duty to administer to the sick person, instruction, conviction, support, consolation, or encouragement, as his case may seem to require.

At a proper time, when he is most composed, the minister shall pray with and for him.

X. Lastly, the minister may improve the present occasion to exhort those about the sick, to consider their mortality; to turn to the Lord and make their peace with him; in health to prepare for sickness, death and judgment.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Burial of the Dead.

I. When any person departs this life, let the corpse be taken care of in a decent manner; and be kept a proper and sufficient time before interment.

II. When the season for the funeral comes, let the dead body be decently attended to the grave, and interred. During such solemn occasions, let all who attend conduct themselves with becoming gravity; and apply themselves to serious meditation or discourse: and the minister, if present, may exhort them to consider the frailty of life, and the importance of being prepared for death and eternity.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of Fasting, and of the Observation of the Days of Thanksgiving.

I. There is no day under the gospel commanded to be kept holy, except the Lord's day, which is the christian sabbath.

II. Nevertheless, to observe days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the extraordinary dispensations of divine providence may direct, we judge both scriptural and rational.

III. Fasts and thanksgivings may be observed by individual Christians; or families, in private;

by particular congregations; by a number of congregations contiguous to each other; by the congregations under the care of a presbytery, or of a synod; or by all the congregations of our church.

IV. It must be left to the judgment and discretion of every Christian and family to determine, when it is proper to observe a private fast or thanksgiving; and to the church-sessions to determine for particular congregations; and to the presbyteries or synods to determine for larger districts. When it is deemed expedient that a fast or thanksgiving should be general, the call for them must be judged of by the synod or General Assembly. And if at any time the civil power should think it proper to appoint a fast or thanksgiving, it is the duty of the ministers and people of our communion, as we live under a Christian government, to pay all due respect to the same.

V. Public notice is to be given a convenient time before the day of fasting or thanksgiving comes, that persons may so order their temporal affairs, that they may properly attend to the duties thereof.

VI. There shall be public worship upon all such days; and let the prayers, psalms, portions of scripture to be read, and sermons, be all in a special manner adapted to the occasion.

VII. On fast days, let the minister point out the authority and providences calling to the observation thereof; and let him spend a more than usual portion of time in solemn prayer, particular confession of sin, especially of the sins of the day and place, with their aggravations, which have

brought down the judgments of heaven. And let the whole day be spent in deep humiliation and mourning before God.

VIII. On days of thanksgiving, he is to give the like information respecting the authority and providences which call to the observance of them; and to spend a more than usual part of the time in the giving of thanks, agreeably to the occasion, and in singing psalms or hymns of praise.

It is the duty of people on these days to rejoice with holy gladness of heart; but let trembling be so joined with our mirth, that no excess or unbecoming levity be indulged.

CHAPTER XV.

The Directory for Secret and Family Worship.

I. Besides the public worship in congregations, it is the indispensable duty of each person, alone, in secret; and of every family, by itself, in private, to pray to, and worship God.

II. Secret worship is most plainly enjoined by our Lord. In this duty every one, apart by himself, is to spend some time in prayer, reading the scriptures, holy meditation, and serious self-examination. The many advantages arising from a conscientious discharge of these duties, are best known to those who are found in the faithful discharge of them.

III. Family worship, which ought to be performed by every family, ordinarily morning and

evening, consists in prayer, reading the scriptures, and singing praises.

IV. The head of the family, who is to lead in this service, ought to be careful that all the members of his household duly attend; and that none withdraw themselves unnecessarily from any part of family worship; and that all refrain from their common business while the scriptures are read, and gravely attend to the same, no less than when prayer or praise is offered up.

V. Let the heads of families be careful to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. Every proper opportunity ought to be embraced for such instruction. But we are of opinion that the sabbath evenings, after public worship, should be sacredly preserved for this purpose. Therefore we highly disapprove of paying unnecessary private visits on the Lord's day; admitting strangers into the families, except when necessity or charity requires it; or any other practices, whatever plausible pretences may be offered in their favour, if they interfere with the above important and necessary duty.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

GENERAL RULES

FOR

JUDICATORIES.*

New rule No. I. 1. The moderator shall take the chair precisely at the hour to which the judicatory stands adjourned; shall immediately call the members to order; and, on the appearance of a quorum, shall open the session with prayer.

II. 2. If a quorum be assembled at the hour appointed, and the moderator be absent, the last moderator present shall be requested to take his place without delay, until a new election. See below

III. 3. If a quorum be not assembled at the hour appointed, any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble.

Substitute Sec. XII. 4. Afte
sentees, th
read, and

XII. The minutes of the last meeting of the judicatory shall be presented at the commencement of its sessions, and, if requisite, read and corrected.

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II. If a quorum be assembled at the hour appointed, and the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator present, or if there be none, the senior member present, shall be requested to take his place without delay, until a new election.

Sec. II, insert "

IV. 5. It shall be the duty of the moderator, at all times to preserve order, and, to endeavour to conduct all business before the judicatory to a speedy and proper result.

X 6. It shall be the duty of the clerk, as soon as possible after the commencement of the sessions of every judicatory, to form a complete roll of the members present, and put the same into the hands of the moderator. And it shall, also, be the duty of the clerk, whenever any additional members take their seats, to add their names, in their proper places, to the said roll.

XI 7. It shall be the duty of the clerk, immediately to file all papers, in the order in which they have been read, with proper endorsements, and to keep them in perfect order.

V 8. It shall be the duty of the moderator, carefully to keep notes of the several articles of business, which may be assigned to particular days, and to call them up at the time appointed.

VI 9. The moderator may speak to points of order, in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose; and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members.

VII. 10. Business left unfinished at the last sitting, is ordinarily, to be taken up first.

IV 11. A motion made must be seconded, and afterwards repeated by the moderator, or read aloud, before it is debated; and every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the moderator, or any member require it.

V. 12. Any member, who shall have made a mo-

tion, shall have liberty to withdraw it with the consent of his second, before any debate has taken place thereon; but not afterwards, without the leave of the judicatory.

13. On questions of order, adjournment, commitment, or the previous question, no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions, each member may speak twice, but not oftener, without express leave of the judicatory.

14. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received unless to amend it, to commit it, to postpone it, for the previous question, or to adjourn.

15. An amendment may be moved on any motion, and shall be decided before the original motion.

16. If a motion under debate contains several parts, any two members may have it divided, and a question taken on each part.

17. The previous question shall be in this form—"shall the main question be now put?" And until it is decided, shall preclude all amendment and further debate on the main question.

18. If the previous question be decided in the affirmative, the debate on the main question may proceed; if in the negative, the effect shall be to arrest the discussion, and to produce an indefinite postponement.

19. A question shall not be again called up, or reconsidered at the same sessions of the judicatory, at which it has been decided, unless by the consent of two thirds of the members who were present at the decision; and, unless the motion to re-

consider be made and seconded by persons who voted with the majority.

xxiv. 20. A subject which has been indefinitely postponed, either by the operation of the previous question, or by a direct motion for indefinite postponement, shall not be again called up during the same sessions of the judicatory, unless by the consent of three fourths of the members who were present at the decision.

xxi. 21. Every member when speaking, shall address himself to the moderator, and shall treat his fellow members, and especially the moderator, with decorum and respect.

xxii. 22. Without express permission, no member of a judicatory, while business is going on, shall engage in private conversation; nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the moderator.

xxii. 23. No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or, for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations.

xiv. 24. It is indispensable that members of ecclesiastical judicatories, maintain great gravity and dignity while judicially convened; that they attend closely in their speeches, to the subject under consideration, and avoid prolix and desultory harangues:—and when they deviate from the subject, it is the privilege of any member, and the duty of the moderator, to call them to order.

iii. 25. No member, in the course of debate, shall be allowed to indulge in personal reflections.

x 26. If more than one member rise to speak at

the same time, the member who is most distant from the moderator's chair shall speak first.

XXX. 27. When more than three members of the judicatory shall be standing at the same time, the moderator shall require all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking.

XXXV 28. If any member act, in any respect, in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the moderator, to call him to order.

XXXVI. 29. If any member consider himself as aggrieved by a decision of the moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the judicatory; and the question on such appeal shall be taken without debate.

XXV. 30. Members ought not, without weighty reasons, to decline voting, as this practice might leave the decision of very interesting questions to a small proportion of the judicatory. Silent members, unless excused from voting, must be considered as acquiescing with the majority.

VII. 31. It is the duty of the moderator, to appoint all committees, except in those cases in which the judicatory shall decide otherwise.

IX. 32. The person first named on any committee, shall be considered as the chairman thereof, whose duty it shall be to convene the committee, and, in case of his absence, or inability to act, the second named member shall take his place, and perform his duties.

XVII 33. When various motions are made with respect to the filling of blanks with particular numbers or times, the question shall always be first taken on the highest number, and the longest time.

XXVI 34. When the moderator has commenced taking the vote, no further debate or remark shall be admitted, unless there has evidently been a mistake; in which case, the mistake shall be rectified, and the moderator shall re-commence taking the vote.

VIII. 35. When a vote is taken by ballot in any judicatory, the moderator shall vote with the other members; but he shall not vote in any other case, unless the judicatory be equally divided; when, if he do not choose to vote, the question shall be lost.

XXVII. 36. The yeas and nays on any question shall not be recorded, unless it be required by one third of the members present.

XXVIII. 37. All judicatories have a right to sit in private, on business which, in their judgment, ought not to be matter of public speculation.

XXIX. 38. Besides the right to sit judicially in private, whenever they think it right to do so, all judicatories have a right to hold what are commonly called "*interlocutory meetings*," ~~or a sort of committees of the whole judicatory,~~ * in which members may freely converse together without the formalities, which are usually necessary in judicial proceedings.

L 39. Whenever a judicatory is about to sit in a judicial capacity, it shall be the duty of the moderator, solemnly to announce from the chair, that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard, the high character, as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty, in which they are about to act.

*Omitted in the new rules of 1874

XLI. 40. In all process before a judicatory, where there is an accuser, or prosecutor, it is expedient, that there be a committee of the judicatory appointed, (provided the number of members be sufficient to admit of it without inconvenience,) who shall be called the *Judicial Committee;* and whose duty it shall be, to digest and arrange all the papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the judicatory, the whole order of the proceedings. The members of this committee shall be entitled, notwithstanding their performance of this duty, to sit and vote in the cause, as members of the judicatory.

XLII. 41. But in cases of process on the ground of *general rumour*, where there is, of course, no particular accuser, there may be a committee appointed, (if convenient,) who shall be called the *Committee of Prosecution*, and who shall conduct the whole cause on the part of the prosecution. The members of this committee shall not be permitted to sit in judgment in the case.

XXXVII 42. No member shall retire from any judicatory, without the leave of the moderator, nor withdraw from it to return home, without the consent of the judicatory.

XLIII. 43. The moderator of every judicatory, above the church session, in finally closing its sessions, in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolical benediction.

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1. Synod o
Rev. Ebeneze
Rev. Comfort
Rev. Calvin C

2. Synod
Rev. Henry A
Rev. Henry D
Rev. Derick

3. Synod
Rev. Samuel
Rev. John Cl
Rev. Jonas C

4. Synod of N
New
Rev. John M
Rev. John B
Rev. Stephe

5. Synod of
Rev. Jacob J
Rev. Willian
Rev. Ezra St

6. Synod of Pittsburgh.
Rev. Francis Herron.
Rev. Joseph Stockton.
Rev. Elisha P. Swift.

XVIII. Motions to lay on the table, to take up business, to adjourn, and the call for the previous question, shall be put without debate. On questions of order, postponement, or commitment, no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions, each member may speak twice, but not oftener, without express leave of the judicatory.

XIX. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, unless to adjourn, to lay on the table, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, to commit, or to amend; which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are herein arranged; and the motion for adjournment shall always be in order.

XX. An amendment, and also an amendment to an amendment, may be moved on any motion; but a motion to amend an amendment to an amendment shall not be in order. Action on amendments shall precede action on the original motion.

LINA, AND GEORGIA.
Rev. John Joyce.
Rev. Anthony W. Ross.
Rev. Thomas C. Henry.

XXI. A distinction shall be observed between a motion to lay on the table for the present, and a motion to lay on the table unconditionally, viz. : A motion to lay on the table, for the present, shall be taken without debate ; and, if carried in the affirmative, the effect shall be to place the subject on the docket, and it may be taken up and considered at any subsequent time. But a motion to lay on the table, unconditionally, shall be taken without debate ; and if carried in the affirmative, it shall not be in order to take up the subject during the same meeting of the judicatory, without a vote of reconsideration.

XXII. The previous question shall be put in this form, namely, Shall the main question be now put ? It shall only be admitted when demanded by a majority of the members present ; and the effect shall be to put an end to all debate, and bring the body to a direct vote : First, on a motion to commit the subject under consideration (if such motion shall have been made) ; secondly, if the motion for commitment does not prevail, on pending amendments ; and lastly, on the main question.

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